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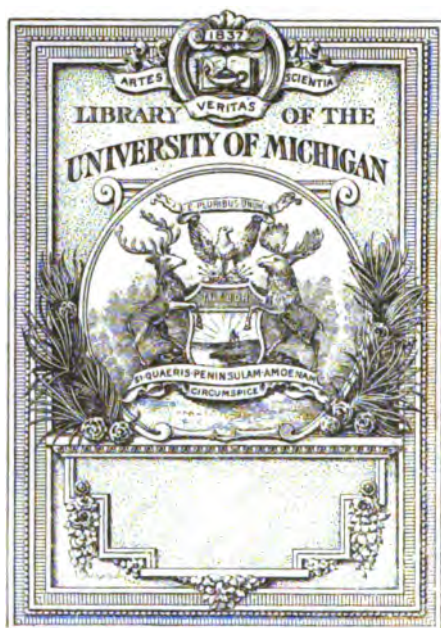
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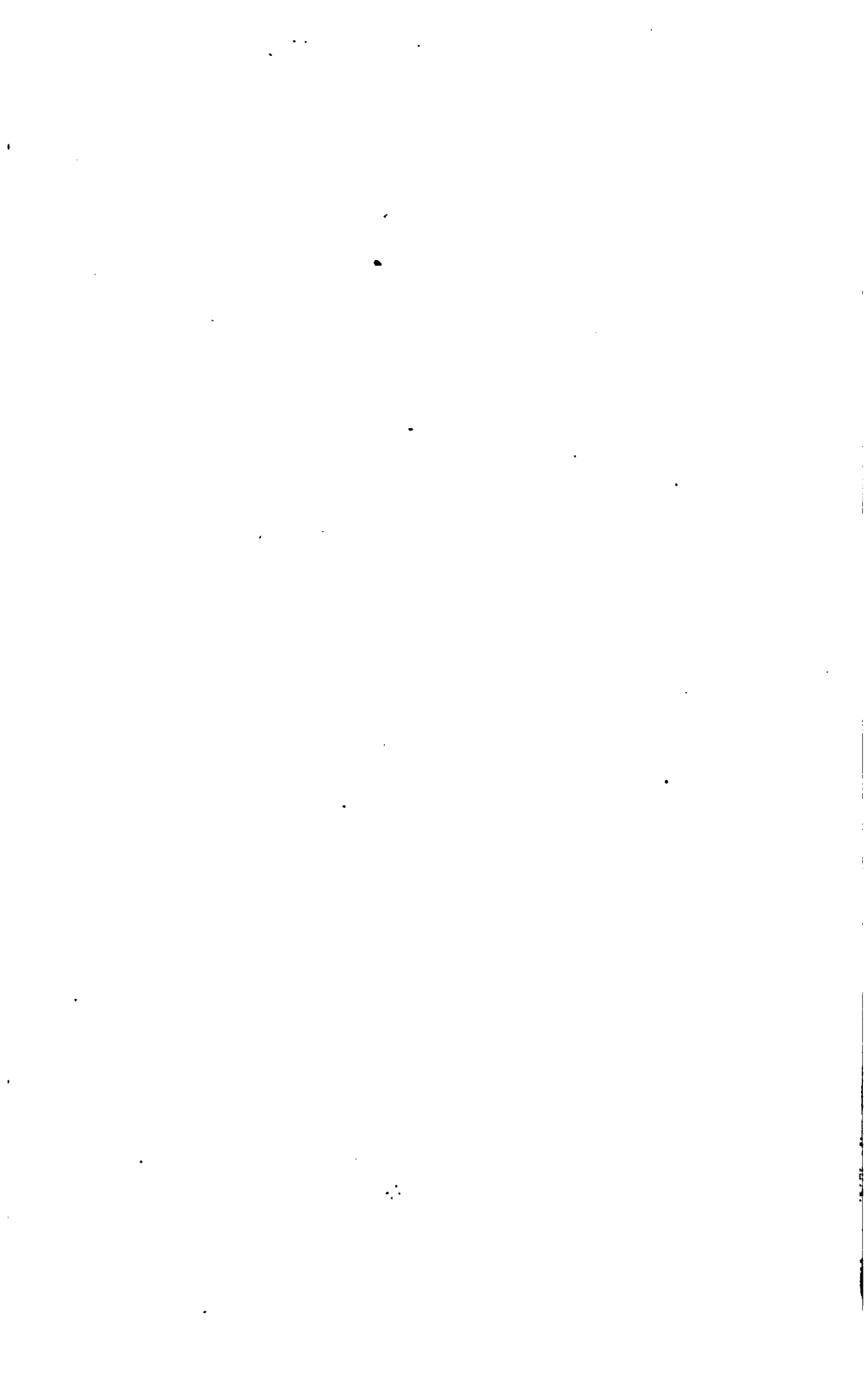
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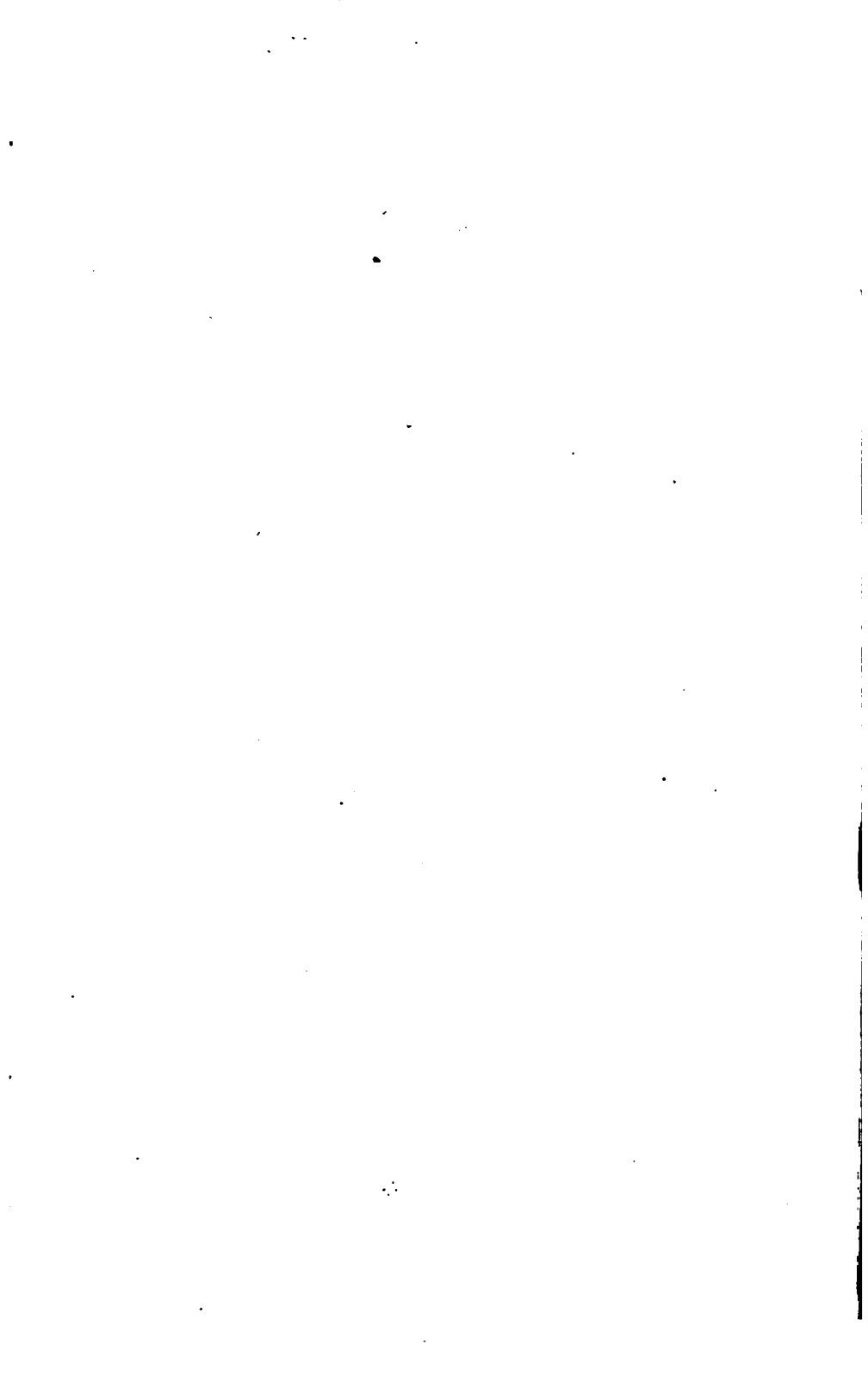


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THE IVY-MAIDEN.

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LONDON SOCIETY.

An Illustrated Magazine

OF

LIGHT AND AMUSING LITERATURE

FOR

THE HOURS OF RELAXATION.

VOLUME XXXI.

LONDON:
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188 FLEET STREET.

1877.

LONDON:
ROBSON AND SONS, PRINTERS, PANCRAE ROAD, N.W.

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LONDON SOCIETY.

JANUARY 1877.

PROUD MAISIE.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE TILES.

I WAS the daughter of a clergyman 'vicar for ten years of Mudford-in-the-Marshes on 200*l.* a year. He died, leaving a widow and seven children totally unprovided for.'

I was ten years old at the time, and the above urgent appeal nearly secured my election to a clergy orphan asylum. Very nearly; not quite. Appeals more urgent still, more clamorous at least, carried the day, and I was left to education, or rather spontaneous evolution, at home, a misfortune which I could never be induced to look back upon with sufficient concern.

The seven unprovided-for children went their seven ways. A fairy godmother, in the unromantic form of a moneyed maiden aunt, came to the rescue, helped to start the two eldest boys in the colonies and the two eldest girls in society, where they drifted swiftly and smoothly into matrimony, the haven where they would be.

Four from seven and three remain—Maisie and the twins Ethel and Claude.

VOL. XXXI. NO. CLXXXI.

The twins were fine forward children of the period, to whose education and general spoliation the whole of my mother's and a good deal of my own time was devoted. They were pre-Raphaelite in appearance, wearing strange coloured picturesque dresses, and their fair hair clipped short on their foreheads, but in every other respect even ahead of the age.

Maisie was the imp of the family. Ours perhaps really required such an item, by way of contrast or relief, to enliven the picture when it became too conventional, an exception to prove or set off the rule. She might have been a changeling, so hopelessly did she put family likeness, mental and physical, to defiance; a small, agile, gipsy-like thing, dark, with large brown eyes like a Spaniard, and a disposition of which the good and the evil seemed equally to run in the grain.

Maisie, I should add, before going farther, was myself.

When I was about seventeen my aunt died, leaving all her property to us, her poor relations; an important change for the clergyman's widow, for the herit-

age included—not to dwell upon a most valuable pug-dog, one parrot, two Persian cats, and a tortoise—what to our economical souls appeared a comfortable income, and a lease of an old house in a part of London once quiet and obscure, but now rapidly becoming fashionable.

Thither we removed, and there for four years we had been leading a perfectly unexceptionable sort of life, but dull even as female lives go. A little study, a little gaiety, a little art, a little religion, a little society, a little charity—so ran the burden of time from day to day. It was a liliputian existence altogether.

I found it not unpleasant, though now and then a trifle unsatisfactory. But I knew no other, nor was likely to know. Was it not the life led by girls of my class in general? And those who are launched without oars, or rudder, or sail, or spy-glass, or compass, must drift on in the regular old channels, though ready enough to drift out of them, should new currents and new winds arise; as they will do suddenly, imperceptibly, without warning, driving the pretty cockle-shell of a boat out to sea, on the rocks, into port, or swamping it, as the chance may be.

One April afternoon I had just come in from a walk, and was sauntering up-stairs, talking aloud to my goldfinch, whose cage hung on the landing. Having no companions of my own age I frequently fell back on the dumb creation, and have occasionally held forth at some length to a tree, a China rose, or to Jock my bird, of whom it must be said that his answers, whether given in silence or in song, always seemed to me twice as satisfactory as those of my mother or the twins.

‘Jocky mine, you little bird butterfly,’ I chattered, ‘I wonder how you contrive to keep your gold feathers so bright in this kingdom of fog? Flowers, colours, complexions, everything spoils but you. How do you manage it, Jock? Ah, you hold your tongue. I don’t believe you’re a bird at all. There’s the lost and wandering soul of Narcissus, Adonis, or some other lovely stupid boy lurking somewhere under that plumage you’re so proud of. I always thought so, Jock, from the first day when I picked you up, runaway and thief, pecking at the cherries in a fruiterer’s shop, until—’

I stopped short as I reached the cage. The door stood open; the window also, alas!

‘He has eloped, ah, the little scamp!’ with a sudden drop from fondness to disgust. ‘I do believe he is amusing himself on the roofs over there, flirting with his neighbours’ canaries’ wives.’

I scrambled out on the sill to reconnoitre, thence on the tiles.

What an odd vista of slate roofs, leaden pipes, and gurgoyles, shapeless windows, bristling chimney-stacks, and telegraph-wires, a mass of architectural lumber all huddled together, and lit up by the lurid saffron glow of a London afternoon sun! The fronts of these same houses were mathematically symmetrical and straight, but here behind the scenes, where successive landlords had built on as seemed right in their own eyes, there was no attempt at keeping up appearances.

Not a sign of the truant. But those tiles were irresistible. Already I had started on an aerial voyage of discovery, not unattended with danger, over those tempting forked roofs, prompted less, I fear, by zeal for Jock’s salvation than by the charm of the scramble. Never before had I

known what an extensive promenade it was possible to take over our neighbours' heads.

'Ah,' I mused, pausing in mid air, 'the Jews and Arabs were right, wise men always did come from the East; *they* made their gardens on the housetops. Delicious! But shall I find the return journey equally easy, I wonder? It strikes me the chances are that I meet the fate of Claude Frollo. Our street is not quite so high as Notre Dame, certainly, but "twill serve." Why, O why, am I so fond of scrambling? There must have been a squirrel among my immediate ancestors.'

And I came sliding down a slate gable, but paused there. Some one else, it appeared, had come out to meditate upon the tiles.

Before me, about a house and a half off, stood a girl dressed in a loose, white, black-bordered serge *peignoir*, which hung in thick folds round her tall slim figure. Her face had a peculiar fascination which made itself instantly felt; not the attraction of beauty. Yet it seemed beautiful to me, cast in a sweet yet noble mould, the features rather large, but delicately shaped, the twists of ashy fair hair braided back with classical simplicity. The colouring was clear and faint, the eyes large and blue, and full of feminine softness of expression.

Two white doves were perched, one on her wrist, one on her shoulder, as she stood there holding a tapering jar in her hand, out of which she had been watering pots of hyacinths and tulips. She might have been the tinted statue of a Sibyl, or a Grecian priestess of some mysterious deity, a heroine of thoughts and looks as calm as a sheltered lake or the placid evening sky.

As we confronted each other,

and I remained still puzzling for her prototype, she smiled to me and spoke:

'You have lost your bird. He has flown over here. Do you see?'

Jock, whom, as I suddenly became aware, I had entirely forgotten in the excitement of the adventure, was there indeed, quite at home in the doves' empty cage beside the window, pecking busily away at their meal.

'He has led me a fine steeple-chase,' said I ruefully; 'indeed I've lost my way now. If I go any farther do you not think I shall be taken up for trespassing?'

'Had you not better follow me through the window into my room? Then I can let you out again through the house into the street.'

'Many thanks,' said I, relieved at the prospect of so safe and satisfactory a termination to my escapade. I was becoming an adept at scrambling, and in another minute had cleared the distance between us, and stood on the window-sill beside my friend in need, who sprang in accordingly and I after her.

I alighted in a small oblong room, whose fanciful arrangement charmed me not a little; a room without paper or carpet or curtains or table or chairs, furniture proper being everywhere conspicuous by its absence. There was plenty to look at, however: pictures on the darkly tinted walls, a Chinese bird and flower screen, several old-fashioned jars, a piano, an easel, and painting materials in profusion. Clustered round the window, which was large, taking up nearly the whole of one side of the room, hung a number of cages, containing doves, canaries, bullfinches, goldfinches—I noticed also two small owls, and a robin so tame that, though

uncaged, he showed no inclination to make use of his liberty. It was a perfect aviary, set in a frame of spring flowers, hanging baskets planted with cyclamens and ferns, hyacinths and narcissus, filling the room with colour and fragrance.

Assuredly, if men and women can be known and classified by their habitations, my new acquaintance was an original.

'Where am I?' ejaculated I, the intruder, involuntarily.

'You are in my workroom,' said the other.

'Ah, then, you are an artist,' I rejoined quickly, 'or—a naturalist?' I added, with a glance towards the window.

'A little of both, I hope. But I only paint birds and flowers, as you see; so my art sphere is very small, very narrow.'

'Narrow!' I exclaimed, in surprise—I, to whose fertile imagination the novel life suggested by the scene upon which I had stumbled seemed the most delightful into which I had ever had a glimpse—'I should have thought it wide enough for any life, any ambition of reasonable dimensions. But then I adore birds myself; they are like flowers with intelligence.'

She laughed. 'Are you an artist too?'

'O, no; I am—' Never was prisoner at the bar more at a loss how to give a satisfactory account of himself than was I at that moment. 'I am the eldest unmarried daughter of my mother, who is a widow.'

'O!'

A pause followed. I fancied she looked disappointed. How I wished I could have put it in a more interesting form!

'And I have no profession, no vocation, unless it be to read the papers, play on the piano, sing,

and make myself generally ornamental,' I continued, as sarcastically as I could. 'Sometimes I feel as if I really might attempt a little more, but—' and I thought despairingly of the schoolroom at home well occupied by the twins and their lesson-books in the morning, and the twins and their toys in the afternoon. Like Archimedes, if we are to shake the world, we must first of all have a place to stand upon; and I gazed wistfully at the paradise of solitude before me. 'Is this your home, may I ask?'

'O, no! I live with my uncle at Westburn, quite in the suburbs.'

'And this is your studio, I see.'

'It will not be mine for much longer now,' she replied.

'Will you tell me why?' I asked, struck by the sadness of her tone.

The bird-painter hesitated. 'I am not rich,' she said presently, with an effort, and colouring painfully; 'and the landlord here has lately thought fit nearly to double the rent of this attic. So in a few weeks I suppose I must make up my mind to leave. But I shall never like another studio so well. I have worked here for years; grown accustomed to the place, and foolishly fond of it.'

'No wonder,' I returned; 'I have only been here a quarter of an hour, and I feel that I love it already.' I checked myself on perceiving that the tears had come into the artist's eyes at the thought of having to remove.

A hundred wild ideas and philanthropic projects began to start up in my mind. I was not rich, either. Fifty pounds a year represented my private fortune, inherited from my fairy godmother. I longed now to play the good fairy myself. But how?

I *could* not go away, but lingered an hour or more, making friends with the birds and chatting with the artist, who, for her part, seemed to desire nothing better than to detain me. Already I felt more at home in that garret than in my mother's drawing-room. To depart before I had invented a pretext for returning the very next day would have been imperfectly intolerable; and I was beginning to have fears of becoming a troublesome fixture, when the bird-painter herself settled the difficulty by asking,

'Will you allow me to detain Master Jock here for a day or two? I am longing to paint his picture; I never saw such a fine specimen of his tribe.'

'Don't say that'—I laughed—'or you'll make him vainer than he is already. Yes, keep him by all means. But may I come to look on at his first sitting?'

'Of course. To-morrow morning, then, I shall expect you.'

And as we shook hands our eyes seemed to come to a vague mutual understanding. I felt as glad as an astronomer who, in sweeping the sky, has unexpectedly discovered a new and guiding star.

She accompanied me downstairs to the door. I was just starting off when I bethought me of turning back to observe,

'It's very well to say "What's in a name—or address!" but still it may be worth while to mention that I am called Maisie Noel, and that I live at Number One, round the corner.'

'And here is my card,' said the bird-painter, smiling.

I took it, and read—

'Eva Severn.'

CHAPTER II.

I TAKE A HOLIDAY.

'FRIENDSHIPS have been praised and glorified all the world over, in chronicles and pictures and songs and rhymes, wherever there were authors and artists to immortalise them. Modern history and fiction are full of Davids and Jonathans. But how few and feeble do the "celebrated female friendships" look beside them! Are they really such poor stuff, or is it only that we want a few more female geniuses to commemorate them? Look at Eva and myself. I feel that here's an alliance that will deserve to be famous at least. Our spirits must have met and fraternised in some mysterious manner long before we saw each other in the flesh. For this friendship of ours sprang up full-grown and ready for wear the first time we spoke, two months ago. It had no beginning here, nor will it have an end.'

My reverie was rudely broken by the entrance of the picturesque twins, who in their fantastic walking-apparel burst noisily into the room.

'Well, Maisie'—in chorus—'we've been for a turn in the Park.'

'Just to show ourselves,' said Ethel, throwing herself on the sofa and fanning herself with her hat; 'but guess whom we met.'

'O, some of the junior branches of the Royal Family,' said I carelessly, knowing of old what to expect.

'Royal Family' repeated Claude, with disdain; 'why, they're all at Osborne, as you ought to know.'

'Excuse me, Claude; you've forgotten to read me the *Court Circular* for two or three days.'

'So there was rather a mouldy lot of people out this afternoon,' he pursued—'dowagers with all

the windows up, and that sort of thing. But we met, O, we met—'

'Speak out, Claude, do, or I shall think it must have been an angel at the very least.'

'Well, your friend Hilda Jarvis, riding in the Row. Such a mount, Maisie! Ah, don't you wish you had your thoroughbred, and rode in the Row, the admired of all beholders?'

'No, my dear boy. I have often and often broken the tenth commandment, and shall break it again, no doubt, but never for Hilda's mare.'

'Why?'

'Because I've no nerve on horse-back. All my spirit seems to me then to go into the horse. Quiet as a lamb before, he suddenly discovers his mettle, and I, that I'm a coward.'

'O, it's all practice; habit's everything,' said Claude. 'I felt the same myself, the first time I went to the riding-school, but I soon got used to it.'

'Hilda says she's coming to see you one of these days,' put in Ethel.

'That's only the third time she's said so,' I remarked reflectively, 'these three months.'

'O, but, Maisie, you forget it's the season now, and she has always so many engagements!'

'So she has, to be sure,' said I, suddenly starting up, 'whilst I've only one; and I'm forgetting that. Hilda, I forgive you. Ethel, you remember that Eva Severn has invited me to go home with her this afternoon; and I am to spend Sunday at her uncle's, at Westburn. You will see me back again on Monday, I suppose.'

'How fond you are of that Eva!' observed Ethel.

'Now look here, Ethel; not a word against Eva, if you please. She's my friend.'

'Maisie's bosom friend,' mocked

Claude, 'whom she never set eyes upon till two months ago!'

'Then can't you understand that we wish to do our best to make up for lost time?'

'O, I'm sure I don't want to run her down,' said Ethel considerably; 'mamma says she's really quite a ladylike person.'

'Ladylike!—come, I like that!' sneered Claude. 'Why, I saw her go by to-day; she had no gloves on.'

'Claude, you talk as if you kept a haberdasher's shop, and sold best kids at two-and-six,' I retorted. 'Now there's enough of dawdling. Go to lessons, you and Ethel.'

'So we shall,' said he; 'but I can tell you who's been dawdling away the whole afternoon, ever since—'

'Claude,' said I, catching him up, 'did you never hear what Shakespeare says?

"Idleness sometimes
Is best activity,"

I declaimed solemnly; under cover of which grave rebuke I managed to escape with dignity from my young brother and sister, against whose precocious temperaments it was as much as I could do to hold my own.

Still laughing to myself at the recollection of Claude's mystified face, I made my way over to Eva's; not this time, however, as the crow flies, but on foot, up one street and down another, till I reached the house where I knew I should find the bird-painter at work in our attic.

Ours now, hers and mine. It was nearly two months ago that I had astonished her by offering to share the rent on condition that I should be allowed also to share the room. This had, therefore, become our joint studio, and I spent great part of my time there. My mother laughed at

the plan, but did not seriously object, and could not laugh me out of it. At that time I had a *grande passion* for reading and generally improving my mind. There, and there alone, could I get out of reach of Ethel's scales, Claude's gymnastics, and my mother's morning callers. The piano, kept by Eva chiefly for her friends, as she was no performer, was always at my disposal also. In short that room was a city of refuge, to which I could at any time flee from whatever might be uncongenial or repressive or exasperating in our domestic atmosphere.

So I ran in, like a rocket glad to be let off, and singing aloud,

'In summer time I saw a face
Trop belle pour moi, hélas, hélas !
Trop belle pour moi, voilà mon trépas.'

And here I came to a full stop.

'Proceed,' said Eva gravely.

'I cannot. It's a snatch of an old song, a tune I've had on the brain for several days.'

And I settled down on the floor, under the flowers by the window, where rose and geranium had succeeded to daffodil and hyacinth, and the tame canaries flitted about coolly over my head.

Since the day that I had cast in part and lot with Eva Severn that room had undergone many changes. Both of us worshipped *bric-à-brac* of course, and scarcely a day passed without bringing fresh 'latest additions' to our store, treasures we had picked up 'for next to nothing' at an obscure dealer's. To us there was a delightful odour of sanctity about these relics—relics often, I have since feared, no more genuine than the saintly bones at a martyr's shrine, but, like these, defying detection, and full of virtue for the faithful.

'How are you, Eva? What

have you been thinking of all day? How much nearer fame do you find yourself than yesterday? What new idea have you got to put forward?'

'That I ought to be the editor of *Notes and Queries*, to answer your questions in a column.'

'Never mind the answers. I only wanted to get rid of the questions. But down with that brush and palette, dear. It is five o'clock, the hour for tea and idleness.'

Obedient to orders Eva left her work and brought out our second-best teapot. It was real Japanese, but had no spout. We sat contentedly on the floor, sipping tea out of little Indian cups without handles.

My eyes rested critically on Eva's picture, her last creation, upon which we both built great expectations. It had been suggested by a scene she had once witnessed at a fair near Westburn—a gipsy who travelled about with a number of birds, which she had trained to perch on her head, answer her call, and do generally as they were told.

'What do you think of it?' asked Eva anxiously.

'The birds are admirable. If there was a cat in the room it would fly at them, and prove it. But the gipsy is bad—O, very bad indeed, Eva.'

'I know,' said the artist mournfully; 'but I have not been able to get a tolerable model for her.'

'Take me,' said I suddenly, laughing and starting up.

Pouncing upon a little heap of costume drapery that Eva kept by her, I ensconced myself behind the screen, and presently emerged in a short particoloured skirt, black bodice, scarf, and spangled cap.

'How's that?'

'Perfect. Why did it never occur to you before? Stand still, Maisie, if you love me, and let me sketch you so, exactly.'

'It's remarkably becoming,' she resumed, after a few minutes. 'You ought to go, just as you are, to the fancy ball at Westburn.'

'What, are you going to give a fancy ball?' I exclaimed, in dismay.

Eva laughed aloud.

'We? Why, our house is a mere nutshell, as I've often told you. But our neighbours at the Priory—such a pretty place, Maisie—have a grand *bal costumé* on Monday. I wish we were going.'

'So do I. I love a disguise. It puts people off their guard, and gives one a chance of getting at the truth about their characters. I often think that a woman is shown the world as we are shown the moon. She sees it in several phases, but half of it at least is always scrupulously kept turned away and out of sight.'

'Perhaps it is best for us.'

'So the cook said to the lobster, who expostulated at being boiled alive. I have my doubts as to the blessings of ignorance in the struggle for existence as it goes on in the present time. After all, why *should* a life of freedom and experience and adventure be considered more dangerous for the morals of young women than of young men?'

'O, because it opens the way to all sorts of delinquencies and imprudences, which are considered to do more harm both to the name and the nature of girls than of men.'

'Bah!' said I sceptically. 'Some people are born respectable, some achieve respectability, and some have it thrust upon them, Eva dear. As for the rest, there is a natural love of liberty and change

which ought to find a natural lawful outlet in ordinary life, and which, if this were provided, would not as now be dangerous. The reaction from over-repression is at least as much to be dreaded as the license of over-freedom. Only let girls be independent and self-responsible, and I will go so far as to say—'

'For pity's sake don't, Maisie. I think you've drifted off into some old speech made at a woman's rights meeting.'

I burst out laughing.

'Yes, sometimes I do feel, like Don Quixote, moved to become the champion of damsels in distress.'

'If either sex is in want of a champion now it is the other.'

'You must fight their battles, dear. Man delights me not, as you know; nor I man, I suspect. Eva, were you ever in love?'

'Once upon a time.'

'What was it like?' I asked prosaically.

'That's what I cannot tell you; but I suppose you will live and learn.'

Eva, though more youthful looking than many a girl in her first season, was six or eight years my senior in age and consequent experience.

'And how, may I ask, did you ever get out?'

'O, it takes two to make a love affair.'

'Or a quarrel. Did he marry then, or—'

'Die? Neither. But enough at a time, Maisie. My sketch must stand too, for we ought to be starting now. My uncle doesn't like to be kept waiting for dinner.'

Whose uncle ever did?

A quarter of an hour by train brought us to the suburban station of Westburn.

'We don't live within two

minutes' walk of the railway,' said Eva, 'but we may as well go from here on foot. The way through the fields is pleasant.'

Everybody knows the peculiar charm of the country on the borders of London—there where the distant clamour of the whirlpool strangely enhances the intense repose of wood and meadow. Westburn is so lovely that hither to even Cockneys have failed to disfigure it; lovely in spring, a mass of almond- and apple-blossoms, of lilacs and hawthorn, but loveliest, perhaps, as I saw it then, in the 'leafy month of June.'

The lilacs had fallen, but the acacias were in full flower, and their perfume, mingled with the scent of wild orange-blossoms from a neighbouring garden, pervaded the whole air around.

We sauntered along across three waving hay-fields, mounted a hill, and reached a double row of red-brick houses enclosed by trees. At one end of the street stood a church, not picturesque but for old fashion and ivy, and surrounded by a pretty green churchyard.

We wandered in to inspect a strange and gnarled old yew, respecting whose age fabulous tales were told.

'Our windows overlook the cemetery,' observed Eva. 'Do you mind? Some people do.'

'No,' said I musingly. 'I dare say if one were to sit here long enough one might write an elegy to make a change from Gray's and throw it into the shade. What a large oppressive-looking tomb! "Sacred to the memory of"—"I wonder how often their "memory" is the first and only sanctified point about men and women—"to the memory of Jasper Gerard." What Gerards are those?'

'O, of the Priory yonder. It

is Mr. Jasper Gerard who gives the fancy ball I told you about.'

'He? Eva, what a ghastly idea!'

'No, no,' she laughed; 'it is his great-grandson. The Priory is an old family place of theirs, but has been let for several years. Mr. Gerard has just returned from abroad, and is going to live here with his mother.'

'Do you know them?'

'Yes, a little; and it is rather strange that we have not been asked to their house-warming.'

A few steps brought us from the churchyard to Eva's tiny adjoining home. The single notable point about Mr. Severn's residence was its precious scrap of a garden at the back. Wonders indeed do the good people of Westburn achieve with their gardens, but few were so indefatigable and so successful as Eva's uncle. He was devoted to horticulture, the sole purely ornamental art of native English growth, and gave the whole of his spare time to the pursuit.

There in his allotment we found him hard at work, with a spade and a wheelbarrow, and as happy and proud as an artist in his studio.

Mr. Severn was one of those fortunate natures, a sprinkling of which seems absolutely necessary to the very existence of society. He was large, energetic, good-hearted, but phlegmatic; a kind of buffer for the over-sensitive to vent their nervous ebullitions upon; perfectly happy in the possession of an excellent digestion, epicurean temperament, and unshaken prejudices. He was an architect by profession, and had come to London at sixteen with half-a-crown in his pocket. By sixty he had made good his fortune and position, as men who come to London with half-a-

crown in their pocket are so apt to do. Shrewd, sanguine, benevolent, he was of a crying optimism that was sometimes depressing. In two minutes he and I were friends. It was impossible to be anything else with Mr. Severn.

'News for you, Eva,' he began to his niece. 'Coming from the station to-day whom should I meet but young Gerard. We walked up together. He seemed quite horrified to find out that we had never received an invitation to the ball on Monday. Says it must have been an oversight on his mother's part, for that our name was on his list—stood at the head of it, I think; I'm not sure. At any rate I couldn't get rid of him until I had promised to bring you.'

'Impossible. I have no dress.'

'O, nonsense! I thought ladies could always manage. Cut up the chintz window-curtain and go as your grandmother. Or, if the worst comes to the worst, put on your own dress inside out. Anything to give it a fancy look. But I knew you had one. There was that Greek gown you wore at those *tableaux vivants* last Christmas.'

'Ah, yes. But you, uncle?'

'O, mine settles itself. I was once an officer in the Westburn militia. Uniforms are against the rules at this particular ball; but Gerard has agreed to smuggle in me and mine, as we had such short notice.'

'If only Maisie could go,' sighed Eva.

'Why not? why not? Gerard's all civility. Bless my soul, he'd be delighted. Now I have got to go over there this very night to see him on business. He thinks the staircase isn't safe—might come down at the ball—and wants my opinion. Shall I mention it?'

I expostulated, faintly it must be owned. But the old gentleman had made up his mind, and all other minds, present and absent with it, he seemed to think.

And towards ten o'clock that night, when he returned from his call at the Priory, he triumphantly presented to us an invitation card, with his name and his niece's and Miss Noel's duly inscribed thereon.

'I simply told Gerard,' said he, 'that we had a pretty girl staying with us. Might I bring her? "Bring half a dozen," he replied. "I give you *carte blanche*." And he gave me this. Old Mrs. Gerard says she will chaperon you herself. I should have thought I might have managed that, but she says no.'

We went up-stairs, nominally to bed, but really to sit at the large open window in my room overlooking the churchyard, whence we could see, across the fields attached to the Priory, the twinkling lights in the house.

'What am I to wear, Eva? I have three evening dresses, all told, at home, but there is not a touch of local colour about a single one,' said I dolefully.

'Pink and primroses might do for Spring,' she suggested, laughing, 'or plain white for Snow. Then add a bunch of water-lilies, and you become Undine.'

I shook my head.

'I'd rather go in a clean tablecloth as a ghost. Or—I have an old gymnasium dress that had something of a Moorish tone about it.'

'The gipsy!' exclaimed Eva suddenly. 'Maisie, let me manage it all for you. You must and shall go. Leave it to me.'

So I left it. Early on Monday Mr. Severn went up to town, taking with him two notes; one

from myself to my mother, the other Eva's secret.

He returned in the afternoon bearing two answers. The first contained Mrs. Noel's sanction to her daughter's remaining for the ball; a sanction which, by the way, her daughter in her letter had forgotten to ask. The other was a large parcel addressed to Eva, and together with it came a little note, as follows:

'Dear old Girl,—Glad to be able to accommodate you, of course. Our burlesque collapsed on the third night, so there's that lovely Esmeralda dress of mine wasting away in the cupboard. Take it and wear it; take care of it, though, and send it back to

'Yours through thick and thin,
'NELL CLAXTON.'

'She's a little actress I knew once,' Eva explained, laughing. 'She dresses beautifully, and has generally a lot of pretty things by her. She has often helped me with costumes for models. Now let us see what she has sent.'

CHAPTER III.

UN BALLO IN MASCHERA.

SLOWLY, reluctantly, the summer day departed. The moon had been out since sunset, and now ranged high in the liquid cloudless sky. A burlesque trio were starting for the Priory; one Greek priestess, one militia captain, and Esmeralda the gipsy—Eva, Mr. Severn, and I. Unhesitatingly we pronounced ourselves a decided success. Eva, beyond question, looked Iphigenia to the life, so well did the dress harmonise with the spirit of her face. For if the features were English, not Greek, in outline, the serene refined simplicity which was the

leading idea of her countenance was of that rare character we must still call classic.

Never did I laugh so much in five minutes as during that brief drive. My home people were too literal to indulge in much nonsense, but I often made up for that abroad. 'Captain' Severn stared at me in blank amazement. To a man of his even temperament a fit of mad mirth was as incomprehensible as an attack of the blues. And is there indeed in life a more wildly unaccountable phenomenon than the 'spirits' of some people? It is as if some tricky sprite, Puck or Oberon, had power to enter into us and divert himself by now intoxicating us with gaiety, now smothering us with gloom. I puzzled myself by my own high feather.

But once within the Priory walls the merry demon forsook me. Already a motley crowd were assembled. There was Falstaff with Haidée on his arm, Marie Antoinette busily flirting with the Heathen Chinese, and a little jockey escorting Madame de Pompadour.

At one of the doors of the ante-room into which we passed stood a correct and elaborate old Florentine court-dress with a lady in it, the hostess. Somewhat condescendingly she went through the usual form of words with us as we shook hands with her and her son, a tall Venetian noble in black, a costume that curiously threw out the colour of his eyes as blue as Eva's—eyes that certainly never stood in a Venetian head. In all other respects he might very well have been the Giorgione he personated.

We moved on, to make way for the stream of travestied faces and figures now pouring in. Eva and her uncle had found some friends. I, who knew nobody, was watching that Florentine duchess.

Another lady, tall, young, beautiful exceedingly, and in a superb Eastern costume, was standing by, and I overheard her ask the hostess a careless question about Mr. Severn's party—Who might we be? I also caught the reply, given low and aside, but in a perfectly clear and audible tone :

'My dear Lady Meredith, you ask too much. Half the people here to-night are absolute strangers to me. A perfect mob, I assure you. I am literally afraid to look round, lest I should see the butcher and baker with their wives and families among the rabble. It's all my son's fault. He insisted on asking everybody.'

Not knowing whether to laugh or be indignant, I turned away. Eva had gone off with a partner. Mr. Severn introduced me to a Knight Templar, and the revels began in earnest.

In terrible earnest too, thought I presently. For it seemed to me like a solemn burlesque or a masquerade. Few of the ladies and none of the men seemed to take kindly to their disguise. I saw gallant Bayards and Sidneys, *sans reproche*, no doubt; but so far from being *sans peur* as to show themselves unable to cross the room without some fear and trembling, and the haunting misgiving 'What a guy I look!' all too plainly written on their countenances. I saw queens and princesses evidently loth to dance from motives of economy, dreading to spoil dresses worth ten pounds a yard; and sadly I admitted that we were only a flock of jackdaws after all, despite our peacocks' feathers. Cœur de Lion was quite at a loss what to do with his sword, and my Knight Templar's chain armour gave him a world of trouble. The reigning expression of countenance partook of a solemnity ludicrously unsuit-

ed to the occasion. Very slowly, as the evening wore on, our spirits rose, and we began to look a little less like a parcel of Quakers in disguise. I had been waltzing in turn with an Egyptian priest, an Albanian, and Chilpéric, looking myself doubtless as grave as a judge, and finding it all, indeed, but dreary fun. For my heroes felt that all their wits were required for the graceful management of garments designed before waltzing was invented, and thus had none left to spare for conversation. Suddenly Eva came up and introduced me to her partner, a remarkably handsome, brown-haired, brown-eyed young fellow, frankly and delightfully conscious of his irresistible appearance in his Neapolitan fisherman's dress. Theodore Marston was the name I caught, but his face had something unmistakably southern in its type, and I found it easiest to think of him 'in character' as Masaniello. He led me off to dance. Here was a change, and a blessed one—a masquerader not ashamed of his borrowed plumes. We talked without stopping. It was all the merest nonsense; light, frothy, sparkling, and pleasant, like the claret-cup and the crackers, but just as little worth dwelling upon. My cavalier all the while, as I was somehow aware, paid but the minimum amount of attention to me, his partner. That animation was simply the overflow of animal spirits, like the gambolling of a spaniel that sees its master putting on his hat, or, to be more poetical, like the chirruping of a skylark. To him I was just a girl—a nice girl, perhaps—but he was at an age when all girls look nice. His heart, besides, was already gone for the evening to Lady Meredith. He raved about her beauty to me. I responded, which seemed both highly to sur-

prise and to delight him; and he confided to me that the object of his admiration had graciously promised him a waltz in the course of the evening.

That was the first dance I had really enjoyed. I was sorry when it came to an end and my lively exhilarating partner left me, having first shown me, with boyish glee, his card crammed with engagements.

I sat there by Mr. Severn, a little figure in variegated skirts overspread by a tunic of gold chains with sequins hanging everywhere, a blue starry scarf round my waist, bodice and head-dress of gold, and tambourine by my side. I became critical, as non-dancers do. Presently I found myself—not for the first time that evening—unconsciously watching Mr. Gerard. Why was he so conspicuous? There were taller men in the room; there were many handsomer; his costume was the very reverse of showy.

What was it in him that, so to speak, appropriated attention? In that whirling maze of brilliant figures his was always visible, seeming moreover, wherever it passed, to extinguish and dwarf the others by a certain stamp of uncommon power, refinement, and repose—a combination not often seen, and beside which other types fall into insignificance.

He looked frankly bored, which was excusable. Ladies were in the majority, and as host he was in duty bound to provide for the wallflowers. 'Even to the awful point of dancing with them himself,' thought I, amused.

At that moment he caught my eyes fixed upon him with a little look of curiosity. I happened to lie in his way, a wallflower too. He glanced around him in dismay—already the last man had been pressed into the service—then

came to a standstill before me, striving to recollect my name.

That was out of the question. Fortunately the dress spoke for itself.

'Mademoiselle Esmeralda,' he said, with as much politeness as a bow and ceremonious tone can carry, 'may I have the pleasure of dancing with you?'

'O, no, *eccellenza*,' I replied quickly, echoing his tone of mock respect; 'too much honour by far for a gipsy.'

'O, nonsense!' he said, laughing; and swept me off unresistingly to the dance.

Only twice round the room; then he stopped and led me into the hall, saying,

'You are tired; so am I. Let us rest a little.'

I was not tired, though breathless, after that brief wild waltz. But I fancied he was accustomed to find young ladies thinking that he knew best, and acquiesced in whatever he proposed. 'Should we go in to supper?' said he. By all means. But the table was crowded. Into the conservatory, then? Certainly. But there, again, we found all the seats occupied by picturesque-looking couples. 'We won't disturb them,' said Mr. Gerard discreetly; and I wondered why it is that we can never see a lady and gentleman in a greenhouse together without an impression that the latter must be proposing at the very least.

As we wandered down the passages I so far overcame my awe of my partner as to hazard an admiring remark on the Priory—a most sympathetic house to erratic minds.

'Yes; it's a quaint old rambling pile of a place, is it not?' he responded carelessly.

'Such as one might look for in the precincts of a cathedral, or the wilds of Devonshire.'

'Exactly; I know what you mean. Well but inconveniently built, with damp picturesque panelled rooms, stray steps to trip you up, large chimneys to smoke, shaky spiral staircases, oak floors for spraining ankles, and oriel windows that will neither open nor shut.'

'And all within sound of Bow Bells and sight of the Clock Tower. O, what a charming room that is!' I exclaimed involuntarily, as we passed a doorway.

'That's my study,' said he, pleased. 'Do you like it? Then let us go in.'

The door stood wide open, as also the tall narrow windows. They were level with the ground, and overlooked a lawn dimly lit up by Chinese lanterns, and dotted with trees, tents, and happy pairs.

The study was empty. We seated ourselves on the divan, where we could still hear the wavy waltzes in the ballroom, and watch the masqueraders sauntering up and down the passage and over the grass in the garden.

Mr. Gerard's library was not large; but, books apart, the fine tapestry on the walls, carved-oak furniture, rare and delicate blue tiles on the hearth, quaint coloured glass in the windows, and several choice gems of art, made of it a little picture that engraved itself in my memory as a thing I could never forget afterwards, even though I would.

'Rather too like an International Exhibition, isn't it?' he said uncomfortably. 'It is scarcely in order yet—rugs from Persia, tea-trays from Japan, slippers from Turkey, and so on.'

'O, don't say that,' I returned, with a sigh of envy; 'our poor little attic will look poorer than ever after this.'

'Attic?' he repeated, laughing.

'May I ask, do you inhabit an attic?'

'Did you expect La Esmeralda to inhabit a Venetian palazzo? Let me tell you Miss Severn and I share a garret on the third floor, which we are trying as fast as possible to transform into an old curiosity shop. Nothing under a hundred years of age is admitted.'

'Then you must first exclude yourselves.'

'Furniture, furniture—don't you understand?'

He seemed amused.

'So you have a study too. Pray what do you study there?'

'Miss Severn paints.'

'And you?'

'I?—O, gipsies are the idlest people, you know. What should they do? Dance or tell fortunes.'

'Then you can tell me mine, of course. Begin, please.'

His manner won me singularly; and manner speaks volumes. Superiority was there without self-assertion, politeness without affectation. If only I could have shaken off a stupid sensation of timidity, reminding me of my feelings when, as a child, I used to play with a huge Newfoundland dog! That was delightful too—a most fascinating game, but with dashes of terror between. Mr. Gerard was alarming, because it was written on the face of him that he would be critical and hard to please. 'But how can it possibly matter to me,' thought I, 'whether I please him or not?' Unanswerable; only whilst dancing and chatting with my other partners it had never occurred to me to make such speculations at all.

I shunned looking him full in the face; his placidity was disconcerting. I sat staring straight before me, staring at the reflection of our two heads in a Venetian mirror on the opposite wall. Es-

meralda, and—shall we say?—Ezra looking at her for a moment with a certain admiration, but which to me, from him, seemed worse than none.

'Well, and my fortune?' said he presently.

I turned round and faced him boldly. At that time I believed firmly in the equality of the sexes, and to be riveted and spellbound thus, even for a minute, by a miserable man was simply contemptible.

'Your fortune, Mr. Gerard? But you and I are strangers.'

'If that perplexes you, you are not the sorceress you profess to be.'

'Aren't you afraid lest the sorceress shouldn't prophesy good concerning you, but evil?'

'O, if you do that, I sha'n't believe you, that's all,' said he, laughing. 'After all, there are only two evils a man must dread, because he can't escape them. I don't need the voice of a prophetess to warn me of their approach; and fortunately the last puts an end to the first.'

'And which are these—the only two?'

'Old age and death. I warn you I have nothing else to fear.'

'Then you must surely be the prince at whose birth all the fairies presided.'

'Don't say that, for, if I recollect right, there always came some tiresome uninvited guest, who sent a curse that spoilt everything.'

'Fear her, then,' said I playfully.

'Not I; why, she can't avert gray hairs or the grave. As for the rest, good or evil, it rests with a man himself to choose or decline.'

'Then may you always know them apart!' said I at random.

'What?' he laughed; 'do you think I should make a mistake?'

'Why not? Fortune so often says, "Shut your eyes and open your mouth," and what we believed to be bread turns out a stone.'

'Most true. Now can Esmeralda the wise tell her own fortune?'

'I don't see it written in my face or in my hand.'

'Perhaps in the stars, then. Suppose we go out, and cast your horoscope.'

We stepped into the garden, strolled away over the turf, in and out of the shrubberies, and up and down the chestnut avenue. The night was warm and still, not a breath stirred to carry away the scent of the flowers that made the air heavy with sweetness.

'What a sky!' said he suddenly; 'I have not seen so many stars out since I left Italy. One could almost fancy oneself back in Venice.'

'Venice!' I repeated, 'for the name to me had a charmed sound, like "paradise" or "fairylend." 'Were you there lately?'

'O, about a month or two ago,' and he began talking of the lagunes, the gondolas, the palaces, sunsets on the Lido, and all the other famous fascinations of that city of wonders, without even pretending to be indifferent to them. I listened as a sparrow might to the travellers' tales of a lucky swallow.

And the English garden and the English assembly melted away, and, lo it was Carnival time, and a *bal masqué*. We were in St. Mark's Piazza, now watching the *festa*, now on a stone balcony listening to the sleepy ripple of oars and the songs of serenaders below.

Then we went on to Rome, and he took me—by moonlight, of course—over the ruins of the Forum, brought before me the

temples, churches, and priceless art monuments of two worlds that mark out that spot above all others, and ever must, through all changes to come.

Then somehow we got to Naples, spent some time among the frescoes of Pompeii, and wasted more under the orange-woods of Sorrento.

Tiring of this we flew off to Algiers, Tunis, Egypt—for Mr. Gerard had been an enterprising swallow—thence with one leap we crossed over to the rude forests of Norway, and, with all proper admiration for the north, true and tender as it may be, agreed just then to prefer the south.

Whilst taking these Ariel-like travels in all directions, we were sitting quietly in a kind of natural arbour of bushes overgrown by trailing roses, honeysuckles, and creepers. I might pine for Italy figuratively, but nevertheless, pining here, listening to the story of Mr. Gerard's graphic *impressions de voyage*, I was happy, exquisitely, irrationally happy, as I had never felt before.

A young man in red and yellow garments, with a fool's cap and bells on his head, came lounging by, looking about him. He glanced into the arbour and stopped.

'Ah, Gerard, sorry to interrupt, but Mrs. Gerard has been asking for you everywhere. She wants you particularly, I was told.'

'Does she indeed?' returned Mr. Gerard, with refreshing insolence. The intruder beat an affronted retreat, and I laughed.

'I think I must go and see what she wants, though,' said my companion, when the other was out of sight. 'I'll come back to you directly, if you'll wait here for me. That is, unless you are longing to return to the ball-room?'

I was not longing to return to the

ballroom, and said I would wait. He had not disappeared many minutes before I began to repent. He did not return directly, and here was I, a maiden all forlorn, in my bower. Couples would come wandering in, and wonder, as well they might, to find me there alone. Mr. Gerard might be unavoidably detained. Supposing he forgot me. Emerald a no doubt was, by rights, a very independent young person. Still, this was my first appearance in that character, and I scarcely relished the idea of sallying forth, without even a goat to protect me, to seek my friends and my fortune in that crowd. I felt extremely irate with Mr. Gerard. Return at last he must, surely. Then he will apologise, and I shall stiffly request him to be so good as to conduct me back to the ball-room.

I waited and waited, and at last, in desperation, was on the point of emerging when I caught sight of the truant in the distance, coming up the winding walk.

Not alone. The lovely Lady Meredith was on his arm!

This was insult—multiplying injury. Quick as thought I slipped out. The prospect of being found—of making a third with them in that odious bower—was not to be borne for a moment.

As they passed, seeing it empty, they sauntered in.

I stood outside, lingering dubiously under the chestnuts. I had certainly not improved my position by forsaking even the kindly shelter of the arbour. At this awkward moment I heard a footstep approaching, and a voice humming an air from the *Elisir d'Amore*.

It was Masaniello, also by himself.

'Why, Miss Noel! and all alone! What does this mean?'

'It means that my partner was called away to speak to somebody,' said I vaguely, 'and we got separated.'

'And you are looking for him. Just my case. Won't you take my arm? and then we can look together.'

Gladly I accepted the timely escort.

'I wonder,' he resumed restlessly, 'if she means to cheat me out of the dance I've been looking forward to all the evening?'

'Depend upon it she is waiting just as impatiently, and wondering what has become of you. But who is to find anybody in this crowd?'

'Still I thought I must see her.'

'Why? Is she "more than common tall"?'

'She is more than common beautiful,' returned Masaniello enthusiastically.

'I won't ask her name. But her costume?'

'It is Greek, I suppose—Medora, Zoraide, Zuleika.'

'Zuleika!' I exclaimed suddenly. 'Ah, Lady Meredith, of course. I saw the gleam of her gold bracelets only two minutes ago. Where was it? O, I recollect; across the twigs of that arbour.'

'What? In there?' and he drew me off in the direction. 'Yes, that she is, and with Gerard too,' savagely.

'Better not disturb them,' I urged ironically; but he persisted. The fantastic scene, summernight, bright lights, music and dancing, perhaps also the champagne, had all helped to exhilarate him, and turned his head a little.

I remonstrated no further, and the next moment we stood looking in at them.

'Admirable!' muttered the jealous boy in my ear, darting angry

glances at the pair. 'They ought to be photographed so.'

I could have laughed aloud. I only saw one thing—that Mr. Gerard looked so bored, plainly, profoundly bored. Under that deceptive trellis of eglantine and clematis he sat with the patience of a Christian martyr or a well-bred Englishman, doing his duty, the civil, that is, to his lady-guest, who, as a peer's wife and a beauty and coquette in her own right, had reckoned, perhaps, on something more, and was piqued and disappointed by his very good manners.

My jealous pang was gone in an instant, but its coming should have startled me.

Masaniello and I did not look bored or *blasé*, but both effervescing with youth, animation, and wild spirits. I daresay we looked more than half in love with each other. Yet we were no such thing, and Masaniello had no eyes but for Zuleika, the indolent black-haired beauty leaning back against the trellis, regardless of her crushed satin and jewels.

We entered brusquely, and startled Mr. Gerard, who frowned. Not so the lady.

'O you volatile sailor-boy!' she said reproachfully. 'Here have I been dragging poor Mr. Gerard all over the grounds in search of you, rebel and renegade.'

'Yes, but the rebel who made himself king for a night and a day,' he retorted recklessly; 'my reign is not over yet.'

'Ah, and you think you may choose your slaves?'

'I don't want slaves,' said he audaciously, 'only a queen. Lady Meredith'—imploringly—'I think this is the last waltz.'

'And as you will not dance it with me—' she began archly.

'But I will, I will,' said he,

with a smile so bright and sudden that it was like sunshine breaking out over the sea; 'that is, if—'

'O, I resign you,' said I lightly, anticipating him; 'our agreement was only until you found your partner.'

Quickly he vanished with her, and I was left alone with Mr. Gerard, whose manner had changed back again, from fortitude to—well, to what was complacency by comparison.

'Shall we stay here,' said he, 'till the valse is over? I shall not dance any more myself.'

I acquiesced in silence.

'Lady Meredith got hold of me,' he added, suddenly seeming to recollect that he owed an apology; 'I had to take her in to supper, and could not get rid of her afterwards.'

'How profanely you talk!—"get rid" of the lovely Zuleika?'

'Ah, you admire Zuleika?'

'Of course. Do not you?'

'As I admire a beautiful sign-board.'

'A what?' said I, laughing gaily.

'No more, I assure you. She has beauty, I know—plenty. I've seen it by candlelight, daylight, twilight, limelight, gaslight, moonlight, and there's a sameness about it that is positively appalling at last, and only too faithful a picture of her conversation. Don't you know there was once an automaton that could talk when it was wound up?'

'If only Masaniello could hear you!'

'He has quite lost his heart to her, the foolish fellow.'

'Yes, but he is so very young,' I remarked considerably; and Mr. Gerard laughed.

'Older than you by some years, I fancy. Let me see, Theodore is five-and-twenty.'

'Is he a friend of yours?' I ventured.

'Yes; that is, I know him and his history—he has a history, as you've heard, I daresay.'

I shook my head, and Mr. Gerard explained:

'He began life with a good appointment in the Treasury and a magnificent tenor voice. His mother was an Italian, and very musical. He determined to follow his inclination and go on the operatic stage, and has lately returned from abroad, where he has been studying for a few years. Next week he is to make his *début* in London in the *Freischütz*. Why, you seem interested in him.'

'I—no; I never saw him before to-night.'

'Is that a reason?'

Involuntarily our eyes met. There was not the smallest excuse for blushing, but crimson I must grow and crimson I grew, though little had Masaniello to do with it.

'And I daresay,' I proceeded hastily, 'I should not break my heart if I never saw him again. But I shall like to hear him, if he is a good singer.'

'You are fond of music?'

'It was my first love.'

'My first and last,' said he.

Inwardly I wondered how many had intervened. At that moment I would have given anything to know.

'*On revient toujours à ses premiers amours*,' I said sententiously. 'What an awful amount of inconstancy the proverb takes for granted, though?'

'More than is fair, do you think?' he inquired, laughing.

'How can I tell? I am not old enough, I suppose, to have taken many sentimental journeys of discovery.'

'How many do you propose to take, may I ask?' was his next question.

'I don't know. I suppose it would depend upon the first.'

Somehow we were drifting fast into one of those duets, half banter, half earnest, where a very few words interchanged may lead to a most extensive intimacy of spirit where any sort of affinity exists. An instinct, as we hovered on the perilous regions of sentiment, drove me to cling more and more to the tone of levity as he became serious. If it was a flirtation he wished for, something held me back. Had he pleased me less I might have more easily responded, but there are feelings of one's own with the very shadows of which one is reluctant to trifle. They are edged tools, and one is a child at the mercy of the merciless weapon one pretends to wield.

When the last echoes of the last dance-music died away, he

and I were still under the trellis, talking and watching the falling stars.

'I suppose it is "God save the Queen" now, and *exeunt*,' said I, with a sigh. 'Mr. Severn and Eva will be looking for me.'

'And they will certainly never think of looking for you here,' said he. '*Allons*, let us see if we can find them.'

'Which of all the dances did you enjoy most?' said Eva, who had religiously waltzed all the programme through, as we drove off.

'O, the last, the last,' said I heedlessly.

'Why, who was your partner? Were you invisible? I never saw you in the ballroom.'

'No,' said I, shaking my head; 'we danced it outside, Mr. Gerard and I'

(*To be continued.*)



WINTER RESORTS OF LONDON SOCIETY.

NICE.

NICE—Nizza—what memories, what associations cluster about the name! To many who take their pleasure on the Promenade des Anglais, or amuse themselves bric-à-brac hunting along the Quai de Masséna, the place suggests nothing more than is contained in the obvious fact that it is one of the gayest and most delightfully placed cities on the continent of Europe. Delightfully placed, that is, to the stout of frame, who do not mind the icy blasts which sweep down from the adjacent gullies of the Maritime Alps; and 'gayest,' that is, to the long of purse, who do not mind the long pull, the strong pull, and the pull all together which the Niçois—none better—know how to make upon them. To such folk Nice is incomparably pleasant. There are all the elements of enjoyment procurable by dollars, and there in the immediate surroundings are wonderful beauties of sea and landscape which, though they cannot be bought, may be enjoyed. To those who cannot amuse themselves as rich Americans and Russians do, and who yet are compelled to spend time at Nice from considerations of health or duty, the legends of the place will afford an ample source of interest. Every yard of the city has its history, every acre of the neighbourhood its tradition.

At Cimies, at the back of the town, where the Romans, with Roman wisdom, built their city on the hill instead of on the exposed plain, there are ruins

enough to enable the imagination to rebuild and to repeople ancient Nice. Does not the road from Nice to the mountains lie through the very amphitheatre in which Roman Emperors witnessed the arena sports, and in which gladiators looked nervously to the still extant stalls for the upturned or downcast thumb which was to determine their life or death? Are not the people on those heights, where villas nestle and group themselves, indebted to pre-Christian wells for the water they drink? Do not the Romans yet survive in the ruins of their city?

Upon these and other memories let that intelligent French officer of engineers be your guide, who, being quartered at Nice directly after the French occupation of the principality, set himself to find out all that was knowable about it. With him you shall stand on the very spot where the Moslem invaders were flung time after time from the walls they had scaled; where the brave Niçoise Segurana, when all seemed lost, restored spirit to the defenders and struck terror into the assailants by tearing down with her own hands the green flag of the Prophet; and where the Counts of Provence and the Dukes of Savoy fought times out of number for the ownership of the soil. In the magic mirror of the historical kaleidoscope you shall see Genoese fleets fighting the battle of Christian civilisation against the attacks of Islam in the waters of Villefranche, and the

defeated but unconquered Knights of Rhodes sallying forth from the port of Nice, to take vengeance on the infidel. You shall see the absorption of the Republic of Nice, after years of insecure greatness, in the duchy of Savoy; and you shall see in times far within living memory the removal of the French frontier-line from the Var to a limit which includes the birthplace of Garibaldi and the finest port of the whilom kingdom of Piedmont.

There is very much to see and to think about in this direction at Nice for those who care to see and think about such things at all. Of this number probably there will be few in that 3 P.M. train which leaves Nice daily for Monte Carlo, and quite as few in that large crowd which surges around the band places, and, judging from appearances, is wholly given up to affording milliners an opportunity for comparing notes upon living models.

Nice is certainly not a city of the dead; it is the resort of some of the most active living. Even those who to the corporal eye seem to be beyond mortal touch and speech are not really passed away—they are of the class who, being dead, yet speak; whilst those who congregate now in her streets are of a kind the fact of whose living leaves nothing to the imagination. East and West meet in the fulness of incongruity, the North adds its quota, and the picturesque South is not wanting in representatives. But it is the Westerns who are dominant. If Cannes be accounted the fee simple of the English, Nice is shared by the natives in coparcenary with the Americans. Recognisable American forms occupy the streets, to the complete satisfaction of the shopkeepers. The accents of the

American tongue are borne upon the air, and the arrangements of every hotel bear testimony to the Transatlantic *clientèle* out of whom proprietors hope to make money. Villefranche, the sheltered port of Nice, is in truth America's naval station in the Mediterranean. *Hic illius arma, hic currus fuit*, and it was not so long ago that negotiations were actively pressed forward for purchasing the right to that occupation which international courtesy allowed, and still allows. The stars and stripes are more familiar than the tricolor at mastheads of war-ships frequenting Nicene waters, and one sees the effect in the quietly masterful way in which the subjects—one should rather say the children—of the star-spangled banner pursue the even tenor of their way about the place. At the Cercle, at the opera, on the promenades—even on that designated 'des Anglais'—in the *salons*, everywhere, the American nation hath the preëminence. Were it not for the old-world look of older Nice, and for the unquestionably French appearance of the garrison, one might doubt he was in continental Europe, in the very midst of the traditions of a far backward stretching past. The voice that is heard is Jacob's voice, but the place and the surroundings belong to Esau.

Very Esau's indeed do the Niçois account their French masters. Ask that Franco-Italian-looking woman, who keeps the small bookshop in the old town, near the port, what she thinks of the new *régime*. Listen, and, if you can, understand the words she utters—volubly, gutturally, and with much eloquence, albeit of a provincial sort—against the insolence, as she calls it, of the new landlords; their assumption of superiority in the face of a na-

tion and of institutions which were famous when the forbears of the powers that be were the unkempt barbarian vassals of the imperial companions of the local ancestry.

To complete the picture, it would be as well to spend five minutes in the *salon* of the Parisian *modiste*, six doors off, who cannot, for the life of her, comprehend what makes these dull natives *si bête*. 'Would madame believe it, they can hardly be got to acknowledge a simple *bonjour*?' You meet them in a crowded reception—*on ne bouge pas*. At a *café* or concert they will not give place even to a lady.

This is all very terrible; and to people who complain of German conduct in Alsace and Lorraine, it is quite unintelligible. Yet so it is; and between the French and the aborigines in Nice there is a great gulf fixed. The one people may date, it is true, from a thousand years; but the other, as the Basque peasant said to the Montmorency, have left off dating. *Enfin, que voulez-vous?* What is to happen when two incompatible temperaments are linked in forced union? There is small chance at Nice, or anywhere else, under those circumstances, of any strong practical exposition of the duty towards one's neighbour.

It is a lovely place this Nice, with its face towards the sea, its back to the mountains, and its flanks covered by the long promontory of the Cap d'Antibes on the one side and the heights of Villefranche, crowned by the old citadel of Nice, on the other. The seashore plain on which it stands was built up centuries ago by the give-and-take process that goes on everlastingly where sea and mountain meet and dispute for the mastery. Between the two stands now the long stretch of shore that

reaches from Nice to Antibes, fifteen miles away; and upon it stands the city which long contended with Marseilles for the title of Queen of the Mediterranean.

Phœceans, Greeks, Romans, Moslems, and Christians of all kinds, have loved and dwelt in the place. Its marvellous beauty as well as its natural strength have made it an object of envy, and bitter have been the struggles for it. Nature too has had her methods of compensation for the adornments she has lent. Earthquake and pestilence have ravaged the district more than once; and the local chronology is framed on the plan of dating from some calamity or great event which has had a more abiding interest for the people than the ordinary standards.

The outcome of it all is nevertheless very pleasant to us of the nineteenth century; and he who, in quest of a winter resort, whether for health or pleasure, wishes for more of a town than Cannes and less of a sanatorium than Mentone cannot do better than settle at Nice. If shelter from sharp winds be his object, let him climb to Cimies, on the hill at the back. There he will find, in villas of all sorts and sizes, the warmest, cosiest, and for distant views the delightfulest, spot in the district. Cimies is to Nice what Canet will some day be to Cannes. Backed directly by the hills, which form the southern guard of the Maritime Alps, it is sheltered from the cold blasts which sweep down from the Alps themselves. The icy winds pass by it overhead; and the houses, clustered in safe nooks, turn their faces and windows to the south, and admit no air that is not warmed by the bright strong sun, to which English winters are strangers.

But those who elect for Cimies must depend upon themselves for amusement. At Cimies is no Cercle, no theatre, no concert, no band-playing, no promenade. Dwellers therein must be content literally to look down upon such things, and literally to be above them. At Nicesuch things abound, but the most amusing public institution in Cimies is a monastery.

Now the monastery, though not strictly amusing, unless to those English of whom Froissart asserts that they 'amuse themselves sadly,' is most strictly entertaining in the only direction of entertainment to which Cimies lends itself. Books it has in profusion; and it is a sign of the largeness of the monks' charity, and at the same time of their little contact with the world in general, that they are willing to lend their books—simple men!—hoping that people will return them. Foul befall the man who deceives these good monks, and makes them shut up their compassion and their library from the needy at Cimies!

The needy will then have to depend wholly upon their own resources. For reading books, enjoying the magnificent prospects afforded by the many points of view in the neighbourhood, trying to get better, and shaking hands with yourself that you are not as other Englishmen at home—freezing, shivering, unable to take exercise through fear of wicked winds,—these are about the daily stock-in-trade of people who set themselves down at Cimies. One hesitates to descend the steep eight-hundred-feet-high hill that leads to Nice, knowing that he will experience in returning the full force of Virgil's aphorism about the difference between the *descensus* and the *ascensus Averni*. Visits to Nice are events to be fully recorded in diaries with de-

tails of the way, of the things and people seen in the great city on the plain; perils not to be entered upon without much consideration, nor unattended by solemn rites at their inception and their ending. *Chefs* and such divinities, postmen and the like, go and come, fetch and carry. Is not Cimies fed from Nice? But the majority of the inhabitants remain upon their coign of vantage from day to day; and only visitors at Nice, and the curious among the Niçois, invade their retirement.

Yet what more delightful drive, except perhaps along the Corniche road, is there to be found on the Riviera than the drive from Nice down the Promenade des Anglais and through Carabacel to Cimies, and thence through the Roman amphitheatre down the northern road back to Nice? *Crede experto*; and if the result should not prove satisfactory, try the Corniche itself, starting from Mentone.

For the sound in health and purse Nice itself is the place. The Brighton *habitué* will find a parallel between his beloved 'Parade' and the far lovelier Promenade des Anglais, and he will affectionately compare the Brighton shops with those of the Quai de Masséna and the Quai du Midi. But there the parallel will end. There is perhaps something to remind one of London-by-the-Sea, especially in the article of shops and in the prices asked for the goods therein—though on the latter score it ought to be remembered to the advantage of Nice that it is less Barabbas-like than Cannes.

Hotel and pension open wide their doors and swallow up the traveller, and give him reason in due time to remember his sojourn among them. If charges are somewhat high, the accommodation is very good, and people—especially

heads of families—who growl at the ‘extras’ to the pension charge, at the fifty centimes for each cold tub and the seventy-five centimes for each candle, should not forget that Nice is habitable during half the year only; that rents are high, taxes very heavy, and that able *chefs* and quick-footed servants are not secured for nothing.

It is no part of the business of the writer of this paper to act as patron or as touter to the hotels. He will follow the example of the undergraduate, and decline, as that gentleman did, to draw invidious distinctions, when he was called on to enumerate the major and the minor prophets. There are many excellent hotels at Nice. Let the traveller choose for himself, and find out by experience whether the houses on the promenades or on the quais are the more frequented by mosquitoes. On arrival outside the station he will find drawn up, in serried lines, the omnibuses of the hotels, and the only friendly hint given to him here in connection with the subject of housing, is, that he should decide before arrival at what hotel he means to stop. With this foreknowledge he will find himself relieved of all luggage troubles by the uniformed attendants of the stage-carriage. Without it he may find his family partitioned off among the representatives of the Nice hotel proprietary, and his luggage the subject of much animated conversation in a language probably unknown to him.

For the language of Nice—of the Nigois—is not French of Paris; neither is it Italian, as Florentines use. It is compounded of both, with provincialisms interspersed, and with a large admixture of that old Provençal in which troubadours sang and wooed.

As to amusements, the guide-books and the *concierges* will say all that is necessary—and more. There is the Cercle de la Méditerranée, to which men will of course subscribe; and if Monte Carlo does not satisfy them in the matter of play, there is a club at Nice, which the writer will not help them to find out, where they may amuse themselves in this way to the full. There is the Opera, and there is the Théâtre Français; and especially there is, in the Cours, Visconti’s great rendezvous, where everybody is to be seen, and every newspaper that is, is to be read. There are concerts, there are balls, and there are *réunions*, which, like the brook, ‘go on for ever.’ In short, amusements are plentiful and of all sorts—from hill-climbing to love-making. Between these two comes a wide range of occupations adapted to the most fastidious tastes, including that of losing or winning your own or some one else’s fortune, at the tables of Monte Carlo.

That winter resort, however, is much too important to be included at the fag end of a chapter.

FRANCIS DAVENANT.

BEHIND THE SCENES IN LONDON SOCIETY.

I. THE GHOSTS OF LONDON MIDNIGHT.

It was in the neighbourhood of the Old Kent road—for reasons which will presently appear I should be scarcely justified in more particularly specifying its whereabouts—that I was glad to come in view of the twinkling lamps of one of those friendly havens of refreshment and refuge which gladden the heart of the nocturnal pedestrian—a public coffee-booth.

Any man might, under the circumstances, have been glad. The night—or rather the early morning, for it was nearly two o'clock—was black and bleak, and there was a drenching drizzle of rain falling. I have nothing to say for or against the beverage which was served steaming hot from the can under which a ruddy charcoal fire burnt briskly, further than to remark that it would be hardly reasonable to expect a decoction of first-rate Mocha at the rate of a penny the full half-pint. At that untimely hour, however, and in such bitterly cold weather, we were, I have no doubt, all of us grateful for a drink of it: 'all of us' consisting of a policeman, two sisters of misfortune, and a white-faced hollow-cheeked man, wearing a tall black hat much the worse for wear, and a dilapidated black coat tightly buttoned up to his chin, and further remarkable by exhibiting, by accident I believe, the end of a flute sticking out between the buttoning at the breast. As for the coffee-stall keeper himself, he was not the kind of person whose cheerful mien gave an additional

relish to the viands he dispensed. On the contrary, he was, although not an old or even elderly man, one who, judging from his saturnine aspect, had 'supped full' of worldly disappointment, which seemed to lead him into the strange habit of attentively regarding his customers when they were unaware of it, as though he were an experimental chemist, and anxious to see the effect on them of a 'dose' furtively introduced into their coffee-cup. There was bread-and-butter and cake on his hospitable board, and I was about to help myself to a slice of the former when he stayed my hand.

'Have cake instead,' he remarked, in a moody whisper: 'it makes no difference to me; but that's my advice.'

'I prefer bread-and-butter,' I replied.

'Enough said, then;' and he shrugged his shoulders, in intimation of his perfect indifference in the matter. 'If you like it, have it. Don't say I didn't mention it, that's all. Don't take a bite at it, and then declare that you can't eat it and won't pay for it, because it isn't the best Aylesbury. It won't run to the best Aylesbury at a ha'penny a slice.'

He gave utterance to these jerky remarks with so much asperity that I had it at my tongue's tip to mildly rebuke him for his unjust insinuations. Next moment, however, I was glad I had not done so.

'Them that can't eat such bread-and-butter as that ought to know what it is to be real hungry; what do *you* say, Emma?'

Thus spoke one of the women already mentioned; and in reply said her companion, with so earnest a shake of her head that the rain that had saturated the flowers in her blowsy bonnet was sprinkled with a hiss on the charcoal fire,

'Lord A'mighty! you may well say that, lass; I'd be glad of the chance of tucking into as much as I liked just now!'

Without a word the sour-visaged coffee-stall keeper turned about, and, producing from a little cupboard five slices which evidently had been once bitten and summarily rejected by dissatisfied customers, he proceeded to distribute them. He gave two each to the women, and then, holding the remaining slice between his finger and thumb, looked askance towards the dilapidated owner of the flute. The latter was quick at divining his meaning.

'Sooner than it should go begging, I don't care if I do,' said he, with something of a laugh and a wink round on the company generally, as though he wished it to be understood that he took the bread for the mere fun of the thing. He lost no time in disposing of it, however: folding it over in three, as one folds a sheet of note-paper for the envelope, his mouth received it, and in an instant it had vanished. By this time I was convinced that the coffee-stall keeper was an uncommon man of his class. I therefore ordered another cup of his coffee, for the sake of lingering there; his other customers had taken their departure. The policeman, helping himself to a couple of lumps of sugar (he had not paid for his coffee and cake), was the last to go.

'You must witness some strange phases of life,' I ventured to remark to the coffee-man, now that

the coast was clear. 'You no doubt have opportunities of seeing and conversing with people of a kind that the daylight world has no idea even of the existence of.'

He had commenced to wash up his cups and saucers when I began to address him, and he paused with a half-wiped cup and a towel in his hands to regard me with a look of surprise not, as I thought, unmixed with suspicion.

'Is that an old idea of yours,' he presently asked, 'or has it just now come into your head?'

I replied that it was a reflection that might occur to any one, and that I hoped my giving utterance to it gave him no offence.

'But what I should like to know,' said he, desisting entirely from his occupation and folding his arms on his counter—'what I should like to know is, what might be your opinion of what a man should do with the queer kind of knowledge he might pick up in the way you are speaking of, supposing he got together a whole lot of it?'

I told him that there was but one way of doing justice to a mass of material such as he spoke of, and that was to put it in book-form and get it published.

'Make a wolume of it, you mean, I suppose?' said he correctingly.

'Exactly.'

'Do you think you could do it? Come now; supposing that you has my opportunities, do you think you could?'

'Possibly not; but still—'

'You couldn't,' he interrupted me, in a positive tone; 'you might think that you could, but you couldn't.'

'But what makes you so positive?'

'Because,' he replied, sinking his voice to a grim whisper—'because I've tried it.'

'And failed?'

'And failed,' he repeated impressively; 'so now you know what sort of chance you'd have.'

After such unimpeachable testimony as to the impossibility of the thing, there was of course no good in further argument. I therefore merely remarked that I was glad to have an erroneous impression dissipated in so conclusive a manner.

'Don't mention it,' he returned blandly; 'it might be useful to you, if it comes to that; for there's more human wanity and conceit runs in the direction of volume-writing than in any other I know of; and you might be hankering after a try. Don't. Look at me. I'm a living monument of what comes of it. I wouldn't mention it to everybody, and so don't you,' he continued, when he had allowed himself fully a minute to regard the effect on me of his last astounding observation; 'but it is a fact. P'raps you think that I was brought up to this line of business?'

I informed him, what was really the fact, that, since he had put it into my head to consider the matter at all, I had had grave doubts of it.

'You are right,' said he gratefully; 'it's a treat to meet with a man of penetration. No; I was not brought up to it. I was brought into it. It was that identical idea of making a volume that did *my* business, and made me a coffee-stall keeper whether I liked it or no. I was in a good situation when the maggot bit me. I was always fond of reading, you must know. I read Dickens, and Ainsworth, and them kind of authors, till at last I got into my head that I could do it. It appeared to me that if I could only get my characters together, there'd be no more difficulty in

making up a book than a tailor finds in making a coat when he's got the cloth to commence with. I used to wander about of nights, puzzling and puzzling over it, and that's how I came to look in at coffee-stalls. One night it came to me all on a sudden—*this* is the kind of thing for you! Keep a coffee-stall! You won't need to go hunting after "characters" then; they will come to you, and you can contemplate and study 'em at your leisure.'

'A most ingenious idea,' I remarked, seeing that he wished me to say something at this juncture.

'That's what I thought. I was struck so of a heap by it, in a manner of speaking, that I set about working it out at once. I bought a coffee-stall business of a man up Paddington way for seven-pun'-ten, the notion being to keep it going for a couple of months or so until I got the characters for my literary venture all in order, and then to sell the business again for what it would fetch, and go in for story-writing. And, Lord! you know,' he exclaimed, warming with the subject and speaking with increased energy, 'there is no doubt in the world that the idea was a good one, if one could only hit on the proper way to work it. It didn't turn out well for me, because I lost my situation at the cork-catter's in consequence of not being able to keep my eyes open all day and all night as well, and so was thrown back entirely on the stall, having nothing else to depend on for a living. But there really ought to be something in it. You don't happen to know anything about the way of it, I suppose, sir?'

'How do you mean, the way of it?'

'Well, you see,' returned the coffee-stall keeper, stirring his

hair slowly with his fingers and looking out vaguely into the darkness of night, 'I shouldn't be surprised if double-entry was the secret of it.'

'In what respect?'

'Well, you hear of double-entry being brought to bear in book-keeping, and I shouldn't wonder if it was something of the same in book-writing. There seems to be—leastways, speaking for myself—a entry in a man's head for the ideas of a volume to get admission into; but the job is for them to find their way out again when they're called on to do so, if you can make that out.'

I was compelled to confess that I could not make it out exactly.

'What I mean is, that when a character comes before me I am able to spot him at once. Man or woman, it makes no difference. "You'll do for a character in the volume," I say to myself. Maybe it's a female; and, dear heart! you would be astonished at the number of the kind of that sex that drop in here in the middle of the night. Not of the kind you saw here a while ago—they're common as blackberries on the hedges, poor creatures! but well-bred and brought-up parties, mind you; dragged down to the lowest, but still with the nature of the lady, what was first planted in 'em plain enough to be discovered through all the artificial overlaying. They'll come here, sir, and behave in a way that makes a man shiver, and cause him to look in the paper next morning for an account of a suicide from the bridge. I assure you, sir, I've had more opportunities than I required of getting characters of that class for that there book of mine.'

'They make you acquainted with their miserable history sometimes, I suppose?'

'A kind word when they are regularly down and broken-hearted brings them out wonderfully, poor things. I've heard stories from their lips, sir, enough almost to make a man hate himself for being a man. But they are not the most curious sort I have to deal with occasionally,' he added, shaking his head gravely. 'When I think of the queer customers I have had to deal with since I kept a night coffee-stall, it seems that that book, if it ever comes out, should have a chapter or two in it about ghosts.'

'Why about ghosts?'

'Well, midnight spectres—unaccountable beings, both men and women, who seem to hide in a mysterious kind of way all day long, and to come out about midnight, to wander about with nothing to do but to pray for daylight—if they dare to pray at all—so that they may slink back to their vaults, or their churchyards, or wherever they live when they are at home.'

'But you must not forget that there are hundreds of persons who are compelled by their honest business to be abroad at unseemly hours.'

'That I'm aware of, sir,' replied the coffee-stall keeper, sinking his voice to a whisper, and peering out into the dark, as though he half suspected that one of the 'queer customers' he had alluded to might be lurking somewhere in the immediate neighbourhood; 'but the sort you speak of behave in a honest straightforward way. But what would you think, for instance, of a customer, if one can be called such who begs a cup of coffee, not having the money to pay for it, who confides to you in a secret kind of way that he wants to kill himself, and has tried, and that there is some invisible power that won't let him?'

'It would require some tolerably strong evidence to convince me that such a man was not an impostor or a madman,' I replied.

'Tolerably strong evidence!' he repeated, his eyes expanding and his face assuming a horrified expression at the mere remembrance; 'why, so I had it. It is a year and a half ago now, in the middle of summer time. A tall dark man he was, not old, though his hair was gray, and his face white as chalk. It was at the quietest time o' night—about two, say—and I was here by myself. He had been running, I think, for he could scarcely speak when he slipped in, waking me out of a doze. "Give me—I do not say sell me—give me a little something warm to drink, for humanity's sake!" he exclaimed, sinking down on to the form, and covering his face with his hands. Of course it wouldn't do to be free in giving to every one who asked, but in a business like mine there are some sort of people that you'd best be quickly rid of, though at a sacrifice. I looked on him as one of them, and handed him a cup of coffee, and as I did so I saw by the light of my lamp that he was reeking wet. His hair and face were smeared with gray mud, and the ends of his black neckerchief seemed stuck to his shirt-front with it, and at his feet where he sat there was a pool of water which still was trickling from his clothes. "Why, man alive!" said I—it's a common expression of mine—"man alive," said I, "you've been in the river!" He took his hands from his white face and gave me a look I shall never forget, as he answered bitterly, "Yes, man alive, thanks to the curse that is on me. Only that I am helpless it should have been man dead a week ago. You," said he, glaring at me, "would

think it hard to be doomed to die?" I'm not a nervous man, but I slipped the bread-knife out of his reach as I replied that I'd like a few years longer, if it didn't put any one to inconvenience. "Then pray to the Lord," he said, springing to his feet, "that you may never be condemned to a worse fate! Pray that you may never be doomed to live in spite of yourself, and want to die, and try to die, and find that Death will have nothing to do with you. Do I wish to live?" he cried, in a voice loud enough for the policeman at the corner of the road to have heard him; "look here, man!" and he tore open the front of his muddy shirt, and showed me on his bare breast a wound such as a stab with a knife might make, "does this show it? Ha, ha! why, I did not even bleed. Can a leap from the centre of London Bridge into the black river below end a poor wretch's life? I leapt, I did—I who never in my life swam a yard or knew how; I leapt sheer in the middle of the stream, and somehow—somehow," he repeated, in a tone that made me shiver, "I awoke to consciousness on the mud of the shore as full as before of hateful life—the hateful life to which I am chained and fettered!" And with that and not another word he took himself off as hurriedly as he had come in, leaving me so confused in mind that, only for his half-emptied cup and the pool of water on the ground, I might have persuaded myself that it was a dream.'

'A madman, no doubt,' I remarked, as he brought the strange narrative to a close.

'Mind you, I don't answer for the sanity of any of the night spectres we're speaking of,' continued the coffee-stall keeper, laying a detaining hand on my

arm, for I had made a move as for going; 'but I have had 'em not so mad but what they have become regular customers. For over three weeks—and what I'm going to tell you now happened not more than eight or nine months ago—I had a customer regularly every night, that was as good as seven shillings a week to me. A woman it was, a lady, not one of the unfortunate order, but real. Middle aged she was, as far as I could see through her thick black veil, and tall, with a dark cloak that covered her from her throat to her shoes. It was snowy weather and bitter cold when I first set eyes on her—there were customers in at the time—walking rapidly past and looking in each time. At last, when they had all cleared out, she came in herself, and asked for some bread and some tea, which she ate and drank as famished like as though she had had no food all day, but without raising her veil. "Have you the day's newspaper?" she asked. "No, ma'am; we don't have any call for newspapers in my line." "Can you get me the one that is published to-morrow, that I may see it to-morrow night?" "If you'll leave the money I will, ma'am." So she said no more, but with a hand such as only a born and bred lady can have, white as paper, and lovely and taper, she took a half-crown from her purse and away she went. Well, on the next night she came—I was on the look-out for her—walking to and fro until I was here by myself, and again she had bread and tea, eating it ravenous, as on the first occasion. I'd got the *Times* all ready for her. She took it eager enough, but she didn't keep it two minutes. The column she turned to was the police-news column, and she just glanced over

that, and then put the paper down in a way that told me she had not found what she wanted. "I'll come again to-morrow night," she said, "and get me the newspaper again, please;" and down she puts another half-crown, and goes off in a hurry.

'Well, sir, believe me she kept on that game for one-and-twenty nights, excepting Sundays, when there was no police-news to read, always coming in the same way, and dressed in the cloak and the black veil; always biding her time until she could have the stall to herself for a few minutes; always ordering bread and tea, and invariably taking it ravenous. At last one night she came—past one o'clock it was—and ate and drank and looked at the paper, but this time with a difference; for no sooner did she clap eyes on the police intelligence than, uttering a cry and with her white hands shaking, she tore the page out, and crushing it up in her hands darted off with it.'

'Well?' said I, finding that he did not go on.

'That was the last of her, sir. Whoever she was and what her mysterious business might have been, she never came after that. I felt so curious about it, that I got a *Times* next morning and looked over the police news, but there was nothing there to account for her queer behaviour. I recollect what the cases were. There was one for forgery, one for riding in a second-class carriage with a third-class ticket, two cases of pocket-picking, and a case of a undertaker on whose premises was found a young baby in a coffin, and there seemed a bit of a muddle how he had come by it. And it didn't seem likely that she could have had any concern with anything there.'

I did not venture an opinion,

but it struck me as not impossible that my coffee-vending friend had not sufficiently considered the last item of the list he had quoted.

'Why, there's dozens of these unaccountable customers I could call to mind if it was worth while,' he continued, after a short pause. 'Just about the end of last year there used to drop in here every Friday night, as regularly as clockwork between twelve and one, an old woman—precious old to be sure she seemed—with an old-fashioned coalscuttle bonnet and a crutched stick just like that Mother Shipton has in the picture of her. I never saw a more ugly old woman, and she looked all the uglier from always coming in company with as sweet a little creature of a child, a girl of five or six years old say, as ever you set eyes on; a delicate blue-eyed little thing, with hair like yellow-floss silk, nearly all tucked away into the dark-cloth hood she wore, and with a complexion that, compared with the old woman's, was the whitest marble against Spanish mahogany. She didn't seem unkind to the child, but let it eat and drink what it wished for; but the old woman herself never on any occasion ate or drank a morsel, though on every occasion of her Friday night's visit she seemed and the child too as though they had tramped a very long way, being wet with the rain or dusty with the dust, as the weather might be. There was no fear of them taking cold, however, for they were both, and especially the little girl, well shod and as warmly clad as need be. But the puzzle to me was what two such strange companions wanted out of a night together. At last—that was after they had paid me ten or a dozen visits—there came in a man while they were there, and as

soon as he saw the old woman he looked towards me and winked in a way I didn't understand. The old woman must have seen him wink, for all in a moment she took the little girl by the hand, and hobbled off with her as quick as her legs would move her bent old body. "You know who that is?" the man asked me. "No, I don't," said I. "Well," says he, "that's old Mother Mutch of Stepney. She's sold herself to the devil; but the bargain was, that when the old un wanted her he was to fetch her out of her bed at midnight, and that time to be put off as long as she could get a child who had not yet shed its milk-teeth to be her companion. She could roll in money if she liked; and she is under a promise to leave it all to that little girl when her time comes. It is to stave off that time that she never sleeps in her bed of nights, but wanders about London from dark till daylight with the little child with her." Now what do you think of that? asked the coffee-stall keeper.

'What did Mother Mutch say the next time she came?' I asked.

'She never came after that time when she saw the man wink, which I think looks black against her. At all events I've got her down as a witch in the characters I'm trying to get together for the volume, and chance it. But the very oddest experience I ever did have since I have kept a stall of nights was—'

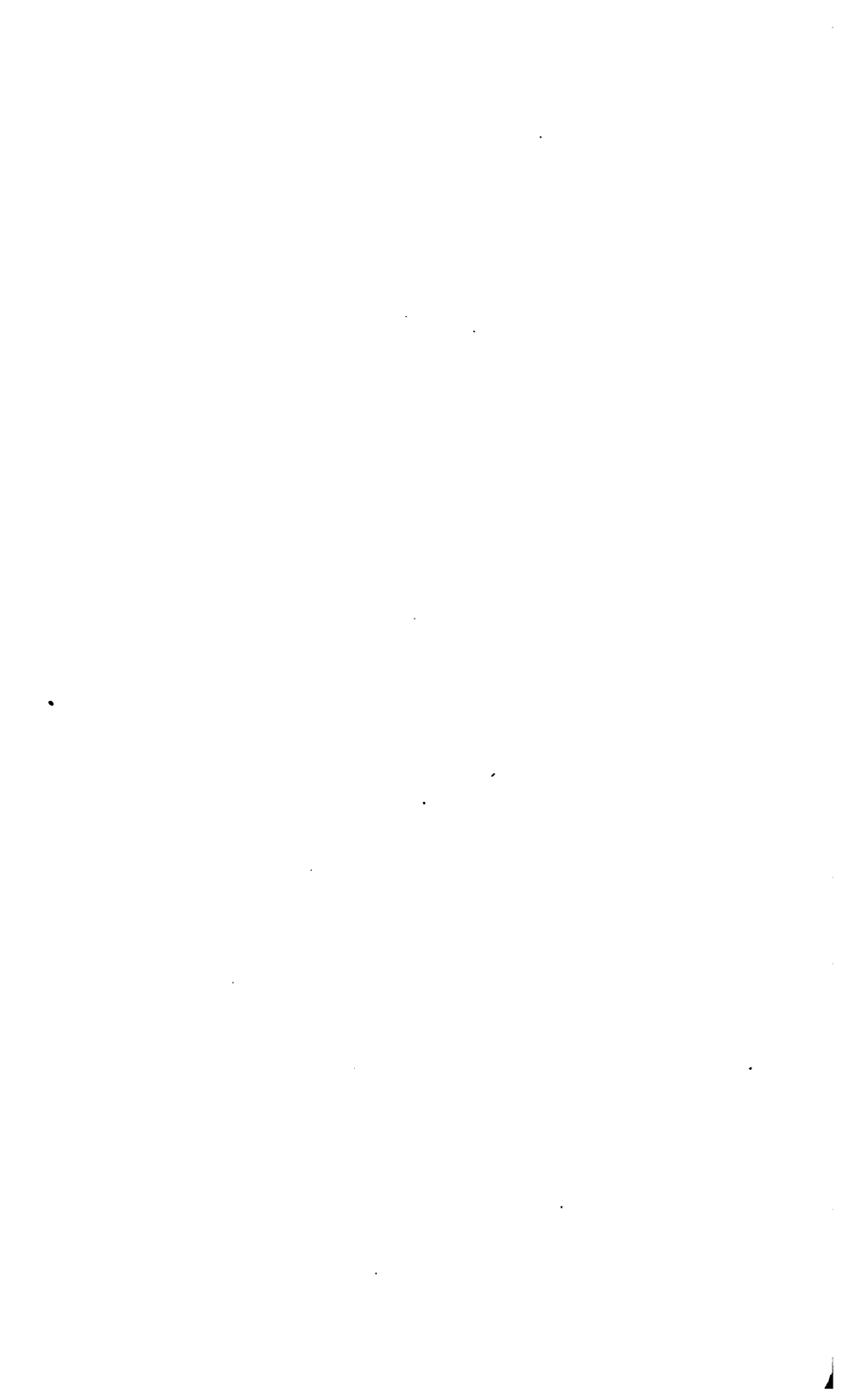
But at that moment a cabman drove up with two tipsy gentlemen who required refreshment, and I made the occasion an excuse for bidding good-bye to the man of midnight spectres, at the same time wishing him luck in his literary enterprise should he ever launch it.

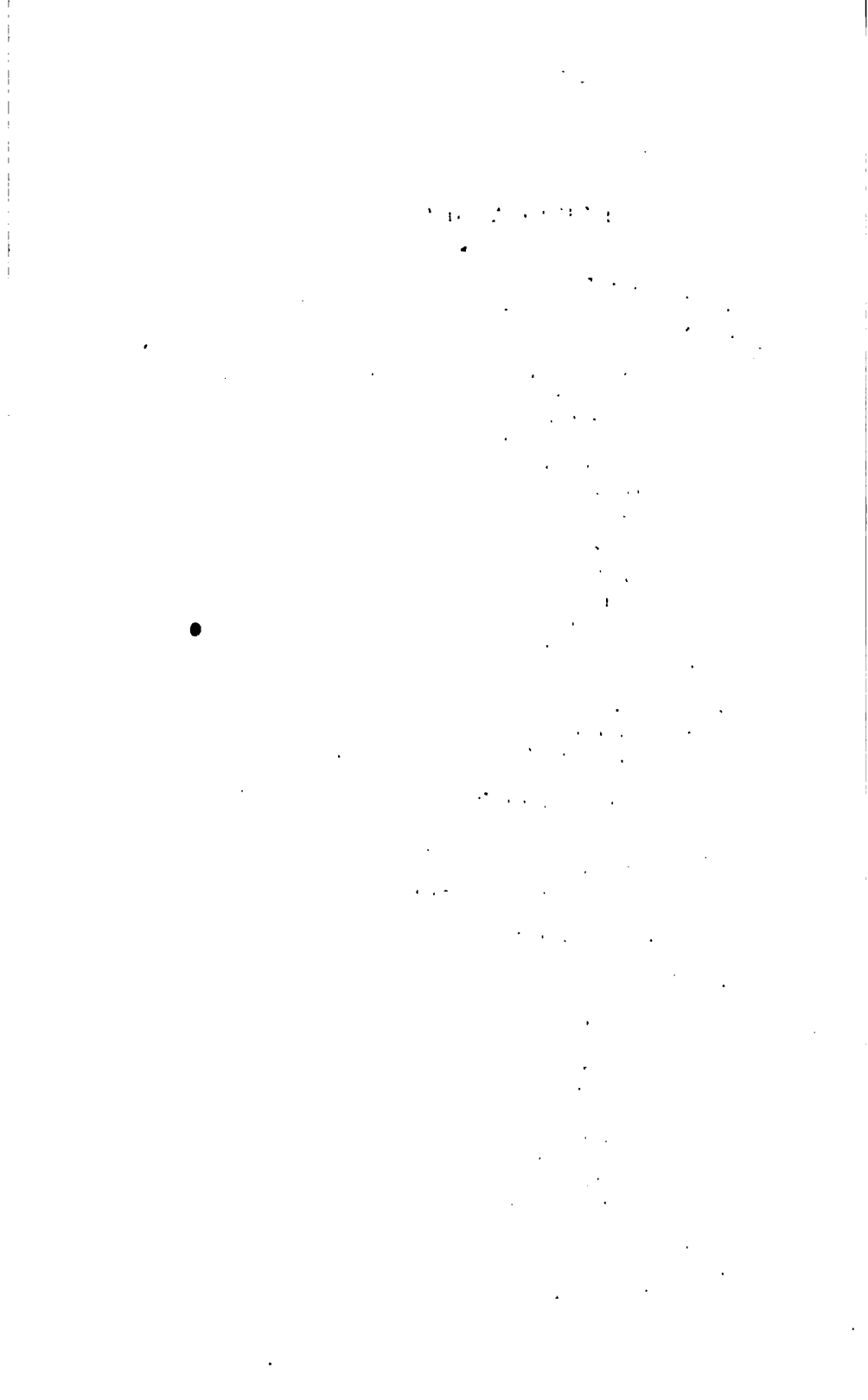
MARRIED BY ACCIDENT.

DICK OSBORNE was not exactly fortunate in his university career, which is a euphemism for saying that it was everything the reverse. He spent all his money, he wasted all his time, he was reprimanded, he was rusticated, he was plucked. It became an open question in the mind of Richard whether he should enlist in the army or drive a hansom. Fortunately a third course was indicated to him by a friend — he might turn private tutor. I once heard of a man who was on the verge of bankruptcy, but was saved from it by the following ingenious plan : he advertised for pupils at three hundred a year, and got a dozen of them. People thought that if such a price was asked something good must surely be imparted. The advertisement, which a friend of Dick's brought to him, stated that a private tutor was wanted to prepare a young gentleman for matriculation and the previous examination at an English university. Now it was quite true that Dick Osborne had been ploughed for Greats, but then nobody could deny that he had passed prosperously through Smalls. The fact that he had been ploughed for Greats was not one which he was bound to obtrude upon public attention. The decision of the matter virtually rested with the young gentleman himself, who, being greatly pleased with some traits in Dick's character which had not been equally pleasing to Dick's academic superiors, insisted on having Mr. Osborne, and nobody else, for his private tutor. It was true that Dick knew next

to nothing, but, as his pupil knew absolutely nothing, the mental superiority ultimately rested with Dick.

The tutor and pupil went down to Wingfield Hall. The odd thing was that Wingfield Hall did not belong to the pupil, but to his sister. The brother had a hall of his own with ever so much shooting, but being a minor it was let off to some Leeds manufacturer. The father had married a lady with a large landed estate, which was settled on the younger children of the marriage. There was only one child, a girl, who became an heiress, as her mother had been an heiress before her. It was of course only very gradually that the exact bearings of things became known to young Osborne. I must also do him the justice to say that when the fact became known to Mr. Osborne, instead of stimulating any tendency in the direction of heiress-hunting, it had a directly contrary effect. Dick rightly considered that grapes of this kind hung a good deal beyond his reach, and that it would be better for him to limit himself to the legitimate enjoyments of his surroundings ; for his lines had certainly fallen to him in pleasant places. His pupil was a very backward delicate lad ; and as he had the faculty of forgetting everything as fast as he learned it, no early date could be assigned to the termination of Mr. Osborne's services. He had already continued at Wingfield Hall for a twelve-month when certain circumstances arose which I am about to relate. The real mistress of the Hall was

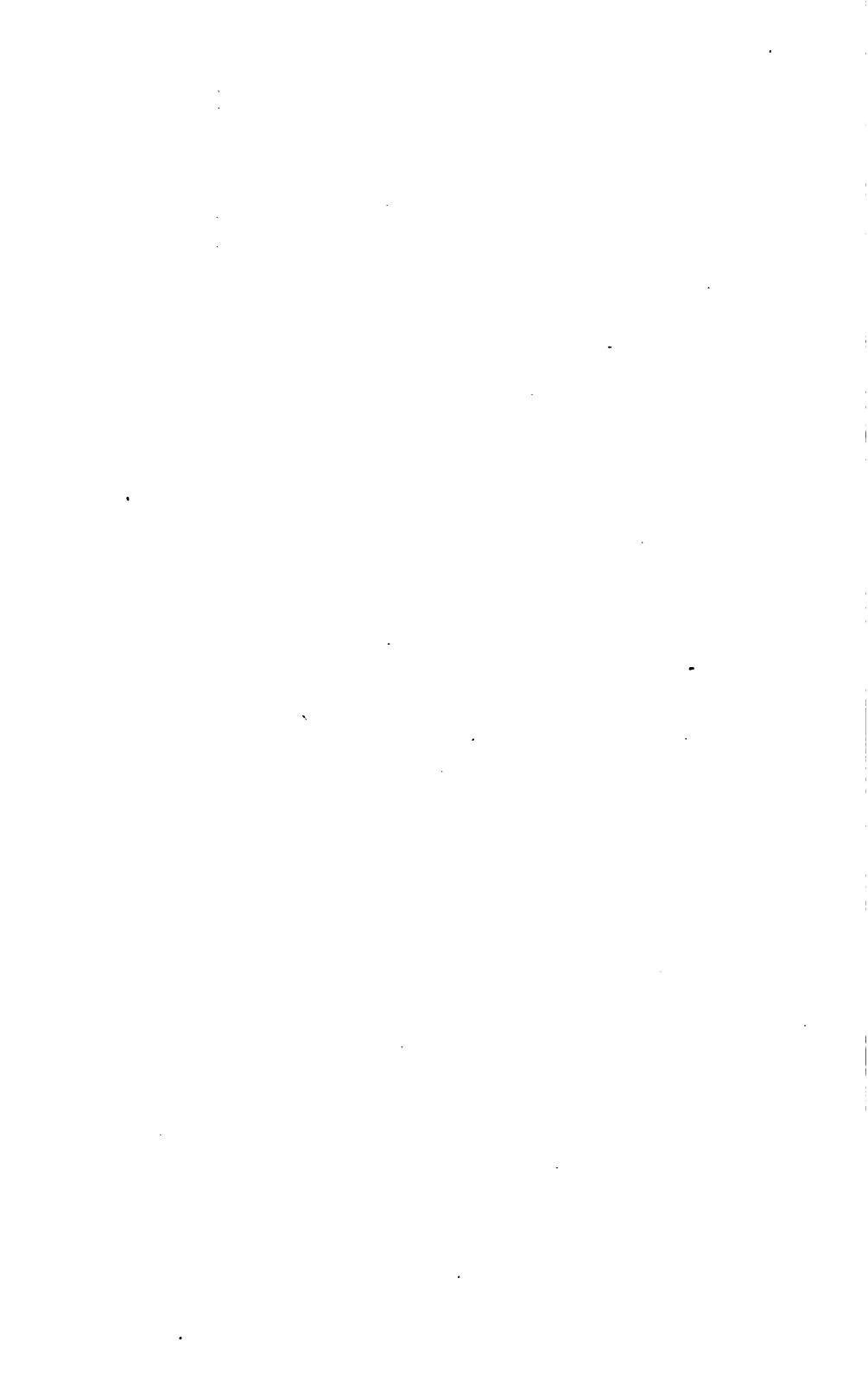






MARRIED BY ACCIDENT.

See the Story.



hardly its nominal mistress ; for an active aunt bore sway, and had done so for years. Lucy Harlowe was a quiet, imaginative, retiring, simple-hearted girl, who, wrapt up in her own quiet ways and accustomed to leave everything to her energetic and self-asserting aunt, against whose yoke, however, she occasionally felt inclined to rebel, hardly asserted or even realised her true position. A gentleman is almost a necessity in a household, and, beyond his tutorial duties, Mr. Osborne made himself useful in a variety of ways which were sources of interest and occupation to himself. He looked after the horses, he kept the gardener and coachman in order, he had a keen eye for plantations and preserves, and in company with his pupil he did a good deal of fishing and shooting. Indeed these were very properly regarded as essential points in young Harlowe's education, as peculiarly adapted to fit him for that future destiny in life which he was intended to adorn. So Dick was quiet, harmless, and happy as a general rule, though a little weak-brained, as might be conjectured from his history, and with a whole store of susceptibilities and sensitivenesses. His natural tendency would have been to flirt with Lucy Harlowe, whom he really liked very much ; but he had spent his little all, and looked with dismay on any chance that would drive him from his warm corner into the cold of the outer world. In the shooting season various gentlemen came to join in the Wingfield shootings ; for the aunt rightly considered that the society of country gentlemen was a proper thing for her nephew, and would probably provide a befitting husband for her niece. The aunt, with all her imperiousness, was an honest woman, and wished to

do her duty according to her lights. The gentlemen came, two gentlemen especially, Squire Dorrington and Major Fitzpatrick, who liked the shooting, the lunch in the preserves, the late dinner. They were rather puzzled and jealous about Dick Osborne's position in the household. He was only the tutor ; but then all in the neighbourhood had discovered that he was something more besides. These gentlemen had found out that Osborne was a simple-hearted fellow, and had resolved to 'draw' him for their own behoof and satisfaction.

They were two very artful men, the Major and the Squire. They sat in the smoking-room, going in respectively for sherry-and-seltzer and for brandy-and-soda. The pupil, not over-strong, had been ordered to bed by the aunt hours before.

They were both of them clever gentlemanly fellows in their way. Dick could not help feeling a kind of awe of them. They were handsome, he was not ; clever, he was not ; dressed in the very best style, he was not ; thoroughly men of the world, he was not ; plenty of money in their pockets, which was certainly not the case with him. They made him partake of the brandy-and-soda, they made him partake of the sherry-and-seltzer. Dick became slightly excited. His imagination took a broader range.

'You're very much in clover here, Mr. Richard Osborne,' said the Major.

'It does very well for a stop-gap,' answered Mr. Richard. 'I must do something till I can take my degree and get called to the bar.'

This was Osborne's professed object in life, but he was himself giving up belief in it.

'You're a clever dog,' said the Major.

'And he's a deep dog, too,' said the Squire. 'What a capital plan for a fellow to get shut up with Lucy Harlowe, to pretend to be a tutor to her brother! Why that gives you an opportunity of seeing her every day of your life! What wouldn't some of us give to have a chance like that?'

Dick was astonished to hear such deep designs imputed to him. He felt that it was something like profanation, however, that such a conversation should go on in the sanctuary of that home. He admired her, but he admired her like the Victoria Regia in the conservatory pond, or the vesper star at an immeasurable distance beyond sea and air.

He hastened to assure his new friends of the perfect rectitude and straightforwardness of his views and intentions.

'But it would be very nice if you could come in and hang up your hat in the hall as the master of everything—the house and the grounds and the young lady.'

In this remark the metropolitan Major was only reproducing his own state of mind. He was tired of those small rooms in Jermyn-street, though backed up with a couple of clubs. It would be very sweet to have a *piéd à terre* in the country, especially if it took the shape of a real hall with a rent-roll of three good farms to back it.

The Squire had his estate, but only a squire can understand the loveliness of annexing the next estate and enclosing them both in a ring-fence. The joy of annexing the young woman would be nothing in comparison.

'Have you ever tried it on with her?' said the Major. 'Ah, Mr. Dick, Mr. Dick Osborne, you are a deep fellow! You university men are the fellows to get on with

the ladies. You beat us Rag-and-Famish fellows hollow.'

Dick blushed a radiant blush. The character of a deep dog was one by no means to be despised.

'Well, I say just what I think,' said the Squire. 'She's a very nice young woman, and any fellow might do worse than be tied up to her, especially when Wingfield Hall is to be part of the bargain.'

Dick thought she certainly was a nice young woman, one of the nicest ladies whom he had ever met in his career. To give him his due, he really thought more of the young lady than he did of the old hall.

A notion was put into Dick's honest head which had never deliberately found place there before. He thought it would be very nice to fall in love with Lucy Harlowe. That might be agreed on all hands. Great swells as might be the Squire and the Major, they could not make a better match. His cheek tingled at the thought of such a match. But however easy it might be to fall in love with Lucy, the difficulty remained of making Lucy fall in love with him.

'The fact of it is,' said the designing Major, who liked nothing better than to befool a fellow and play a practical joke, a taste derived from early army days,— 'the fact of it is that the girl's half spoony on you already. Don't you think so, Dorrington?' he asked his neighbour.

Dorrington caught the cue at once.

'Think it!' he exclaimed; 'why, to any fellow who knows a bit of life, the thing is as plain as a pikestaff. I have seen something of that sort of thing in my time, and nobody could mistake it.'

Now both the Squire and the Major had some touch of selfishness at the bottom of this chaff.

When a man is his own centre of the universe (and this is so with most of us), it is impossible that the case should be otherwise. The Major had seriously determined that he would have a 'go in' for the heiress. But he had the wit to keep his own counsel from both the other men. The idea began to loom before his eyes that he would get Dick Osborne to propose, if he could. That Dick could possibly be accepted did not enter his mind for a moment. He made no doubt that Dick would be turned out of the house at once. Serve him right for his impudence. That Dick might be utterly ruined formed no part of his calculations. The Major knew that there was danger in proximity, and he thought he would remove the young gentleman, of whose presence he greatly disapproved.

Mr. Dorrington had also his ideas. He had truly interpreted the Major's wink, and thought he saw his way into a practical joke. When the young lady had thrown off a rubbishy proposal, she would better be able to appreciate a proposal of the right sort.

In poetry and fiction we have memorable instances of tutors marrying heiresses. This is the case in Currer Bell's *Shirley*. This is the case in Mrs. Browning's *Lady Geruldina*. I do not know if honest Richard Osborne was acquainted with these precedents. They might have given him a gleam of encouragement. But I suppose these things happen much more frequently in fable than in reality. Dick might have been ready enough to propose if he had the least tangible basis to go upon.

'The fact of the matter is, Mr. Osborne,' said the Major, 'you're afraid.'

Now Dick Osborne belonged to just that bull-dog order of

Englishmen to whom the words 'You're afraid,' especially when coming from a military man, who is supposed to be afraid of nothing, are simply maddening.

'You can't deny that you're fond of the young woman,' said the Squire judiciously, lighting up his cigar.

Dick hardly knew his own mind; but he did not venture to deny the soft impeachment.

'Then why don't you tell her so, like a man? I am afraid the Major's about right when he says you're afraid.'

'I shouldn't mind making her an offer if I had made up my mind to do it,' said Dick.

'Lay you a pony you don't do anything of the sort, and that's twenty-five skiv.'

'Done with you,' said Dick.

I am afraid there was a mixture of motives; bravado, a false shame of not shrinking from a money-bet, and perhaps some allowance for soda-and-brandy, might be among the elements of this sudden determination.

Accordingly Dick sat down to concoct his letter. His friends would have given him every assistance, but on this occasion he decided to trust entirely to his own swimming, and not to any corks or bladders that might be devised for him. Thus he wrote:

'Dear Miss Harlowe, or rather dearest Miss Harlowe, if you will allow me to say so,—Although I am only a poor man, and your brother's tutor, I am a human being, and cannot help falling in love with you. My family is as old a family as any, and at school and college I was thought as good a fellow as any other fellow. I think I could make you happy. I would strive very hard to do so. So will you marry

'RICHARD OSBORNE?'

Dick thought this way of finishing was a great literary master-stroke. He was very shy of showing the letter to the men, but they insisted that on the terms of the bet they had a clear right to see that a direct intelligible offer was really made. So Osborne showed them the last line, which was of course sufficient for all practical purposes.

'That's all straight,' said one man.

'That's the direct tip,' said the other.

The next question that arose was, how was the letter to be delivered? and how was it to be clearly ascertained that it had been delivered? But just at this moment there was a light step by the door, which being a little ajar disclosed the lithe figure of Florence, the handsome lady's-maid.

'O Florence, you're wanted here. There's something for you to do,' said the Major. 'Mr. Osborne will tell you what it is.'

Florence came demurely into the room, not unwilling to obtain some little portion of admiration from the three gentlemen. Such is the nature of Florences.

'It is only something that I have to give Miss Harlowe. Please let her have it.'

'Take care to put it on her dressing-table, that she may find it when she goes to bed,' said the Major.

Florence stretched out her hand for letter, or parcel, or anything else that the article might be; but Richard Osborne felt wonderfully reluctant to give it up. He felt like a man who was about to clear a chasm or leap from the rock into the sea.

'Out with it, old man,' said the Major.

'The longer you look at it, the less you'll like it,' said the other.

A neglected poet of the last century has spoken of a hero

'Who, without *butts* or *ifs*,
Jump'd into the sea from off the cliffs.'

But Dick was not that hero. The whole enormity of that proceeding came vividly before his mind. He had far better lose those twenty-five sovereigns. Yes, he could touch his quarter's stipend, and it would be that exactly. What, then, about the outlying tics? For I need hardly say that Dick was just the sort of good fellow who lives in a chronic state of outlying tics. With the receipt of the quarter's stipend he would bid farewell to any further quarterly stipends, at least from this source. Above all, what would be Miss Harlowe's feelings if she ever learned that she had thus been made the subject of a bet of this sort?

He had handed forth the fatal letter in an irresolute way. The Major had quickly caught it from his grasp and handed it over to the waiting-maid.

'Here, Florence; look sharp and take it up-stairs, and lay it on the dressing-table.'

Florence saw there was some fun going. She gave a laugh of glee, and bounded up-stairs. Richard rose from his seat and bounded after her. Then the Squire caught hold of his coat-tail. The coat-tail might probably have given way, but the Major laid firm grasp upon his arm. In the mean time Florence entered her mistress's room, and, just showing herself on the top of the staircase, disappeared in the *penetralia* of the mansion.

'Poor Richard'—for he might well appropriate to himself the title of that historical personage—felt positively sick and ill. He was not sorry when the Major and the Squire, with all sorts of grins

and grimaces, took their leave for the night.

Poor Dick could hardly rest. He took a turn in the grounds, threading the shrubbery and pacing the lawn. He watched the light in her room; he watched her figure moving before the blind. At last the light was extinguished and he went indoors. He went indoors, but not to sleep; he tossed about restlessly. He really thought that he had done for himself. He must bid adieu to the very comfortable quarters where he was so pleasantly ensconced from the cares of life. But I must do Dick the justice of saying that this was not the primary consideration. Dick had worked himself into a sort of fever. He was seriously in love, or thought he was seriously in love. For the first and last time in his life he began to compose some poetry. It is a curious psychological fact that the love-fever quickens the mind, and makes dull people quite intellectual for the time being. There is a constant repetition of the fable of Cymon and Iphigenia. Cymon wrote in that thorough state of despair which is so congenial for the production of poetry.

'The meanest hind that ploughs the lea
To-night is crown'd in dreams of
bliss;

But love's bright gaze is not for me,
And not for me affection's kiss.

Enough that I alone should sigh,
And muse o'er pleasures banish'd
past,

And watch with an unquiet eye
Till the grey sky is flush'd at last.'

These are some of the very egotistical lines. They are not so very bad, I am inclined to maintain; but then Dick threw into this one supreme effort all the poetry of a life-time.

The two gentlemen had bedrooms that night at the Hall. All assembled at a late breakfast next morning, and one or two

slightly curious glances were interchanged between the Major and the Squire. Lucy Harlowe retained, however, her usual quiet impassive attitude, except that perhaps her dark eyelashes shaded her cheek a little more demurely that morning. The visitors, after their breakfast, smoked their cigars, and dawdled about the kennels, and then rode off in different directions. Richard Osborne kept himself extremely quiet that day, and applied himself to his pupil with great assiduity. The thought occurred to him, should he write a note and recall that former one, and beg pardon, and ask that the whole matter of his unfortunate mistake should be buried in oblivion? But somehow Dick resolved that this should not be the case. He had crossed the Rubicon, he had burned his boats, he had dared the giddy leap, he had trusted his last coin to the throw of the dice, he had done whatever is most desperate in the annals of desperation. He would wait quietly. It was not often that he was left alone with the young lady, for that chaperoning aunt was vigilant enough. But the chance would come, and indeed at any moment Florence the waiting-maid might bring him a note in answer to his own.

He did not have long to wait. The chance soon came. The aunt was not coming down to dinner. She was rather fatigued with entertaining visitors, and had slightly over-eaten herself with very high game. So Dick found himself alone in the drawing-room, in the mixed lights of twilight and firelight. To him enters Lucy, who goes straight up to him and lays her hand on his, and looks earnestly at him, and says:

'Richard — Mr. Osborne — did you really mean that letter?'

The moment of moments was

come! Richard Osborne threw to the winds any thought of backing out of the transaction.

'I do indeed, Lucy; I cannot help myself. I love you with all my heart.'

'O Richard,' said the girl, 'you are so kind and good and clever. It is very silly of me, but I could not help thinking a good deal of you for a long time.'

It is unnecessary to carry on the conversation beyond this point. Things were manifestly tending in one direction. The aunt did not quite like it, but Miss Harlowe was her own mistress; and the aunt thought it judicious to give way. When the engagement was made public, the Major sent his cheque for twenty-five pounds to Dick Osborne, and it came in handy.

'How on earth did such a girl as Lucy Harlowe manage to accept

Dick Osborne?' So asked the Major and the Squire, with deep feelings of indignation; and so have asked many others. It is one of those things which no fellow can understand. Though the Major paid the twenty-five pounds honourably, it was one of the bitterest pills which he ever had to swallow. Certainly Mr. Richard Osborne gained considerably by the transaction; but he made a good husband, a good father, a good squire, and finally a good member of parliament.

Squire Dorrington is married now. I am afraid that his wife has told the wife of Squire Osborne all about the matter of the bet. Also I am afraid that, though nominally the best of neighbours, Squire Dorrington voted against Squire Osborne at the last general election under the cover of the ballot.



FROM LONDON BRIDGE STATION TO CANNON-STREET.

BY ONE WHO HAS MADE THE JOURNEY.

INTRODUCTION.

PERCHANCE through wreaths of Channel spray
I may have seen the dawning day ;
Or may have dream'd my morning dream
By troubled Medway's broad'ning stream ;
Or by white roads, through cornfields riven,
My stout gray cob I may have driven
To lonely station 'mong the hops
Of Squire Callow, wise in crops ;
Or may a little botanising,
This morning, when the sun was rising,
Have done beneath the box or beeches
On Surrey hills ; or ripening peaches,
That bashful glow'd in high-wall'd garden,
I may have pluck'd at Chart or Marden.—
It matters not.—My train is due
At London Bridge ten twenty-two,
And now 'tis ten eighteen, and we
Already sniff sweet Bermondsey.
In bark and tan our senses revel,
And now we're on the Higher Level ;
And now we rush by chimney-pots ;
And now we pass familiar plots
Of market-gardens, shrinking smaller
While factory shafts each day grow taller.
And now the many lines converge,
And careful drivers onward urge
The panting engines, and the shrieking
Grows shriller. All the air is reeking
With boiling glue and tar and steam,
While deafening whistles puff and scream.
Exact to time, amongst this din,
Here's London Bridge ; and crowds rush in
And crowds rush out. And now the station
Again we leave, our destination
The City, on the other side
Of Father Thames. There ! see where ride
The masts within the mighty Pool !
Ah, like an urchin fresh from school,
At sight of LONDON once again
My old heart beats, and my dull brain
Grows sharper. In my wrinkled wrist
The quick pulse throbs. O, I have miss'd

You, City ! Yet my partners say,
'Why can't the old man keep away,
And scratch his little bit of land,
Or play with babies on the sand ?
We want him not ; let him retire.'
For, though they may conceal their ire
And ever blandly to me speak,
They grudge my coming once a week.
O London, when my hair was brown
For thee I left my warm tuck'd-down
On winter-mornings while 'twas dark,
As well besem'd a junior clerk.
Jack Graves and I, two smart young sparks,
What games we had—what larks ! what larks !
I still remember one day how—
Well, well, that interests no one now !
And there were Jobson, Jones, and Lowe—
All dead and buried years ago.
O London, when my hair was gray
With heat and burden of the day,
In you I fought the hard-won fight
Of business-life, and toil'd for right
To prosperous home and honour'd age
And record on the civic page ;
And can I, now my locks are few,
No love, O City, have for you,
The place where I, 'mongst hopes and fears,
Have spent my fifty working years ?
No, rather would that I were fated
Within your bounds to be cremated ;
Or that, in soft-lined Hayden basket,
I might repose my worn-out casket
In that still green and hallow'd ground
Beside St. Saviour's, where the sound
Of rushing trains would never cease.
There could I lay me down in peace ;
While one who knew me, as he pass'd
Upon his daily way, and cast
His eye below, might oft exclaim,
'Ah, there lies poor old What's-his-name !'
There oft at eve St. Saviour's chimes
Would mingle with the hurried rhymes
Of piston-stroke and flying wheel
(Like airy treble-notes that steal
Above a bass of rapid measure) ;
There might I, in my endless leisure,
Rehearse old stories o'er and o'er,
And ne'er again be deem'd a bore.
For though a man of many cares,
Of bills and discount, stocks and shares,
And versed in all the devious ways
That commerce takes in these last days ;

Yet through my life, mid storm or shine,
I ne'er have been a Philistine
In toto ; but have kept my mind
Open to such things as combined
The Past and Present ; and such light
As I could gain from good Charles Knight,
That London-lover, have expended
Upon this little route, now ended
At Cannon-street, within the City.
Would you, then, listen to a ditty
That once I made, when home returning,
By this same line, while bright was burning
A summer-sunset, and the Thames
Was fleck'd about with living gems
Of rosy light ? 'Tis of a time
When no bridge was, my little rhyme
Tells ; and to some who by this road
Of iron come, and many a load
Of business bring or bear away
Upon their journey twice a day,
Its lines may help that load to lighten,
May serve a weary mile to brighten,
May link them to the long gone-by
Of this great City's infancy.

THE LEGEND OF ST. MARIE OVERIE'S, LONDON BRIDGE.

The beautiful cruciform church of St. Saviour's, Southwark, now so familiar to all who travel by the South-Eastern Railway from London Bridge to Cannon-street Station, belonged to the Augustinian Canons up to the time of the Dissolution of Monasteries, and was anciently known as St. Marie Overie. 'This church, or some other in the place thereof,' writes John Stow, 'was of old time, long before the Conquest, an house of sisters founded by a maiden named Mary.' There is no map of London so old as not to contain the tower and pinnacles of this venerable building. The following legend is given on the authority of Father Linsted, the last Prior of St. Marie's.

PROLOGUE : LONDON BRIDGE, 1876.

UNDER the arches the tide runs strong
(Faintly are heard St. Saviour's chimes) ;
Over the arches the whole day long
Hurries unceasing a changing throng,
The grinding of wheels is its evensong,
Drowning St. Saviour's music.

Golden the sun on the City falls
(Over the river the sweet bells come),
Touching the bridges, the spires, the halls ;
Greeting with glory the cross of St. Paul's ;
Warming the coldness of gray prison-walls ;
Lighting St. Saviour's belfry.

Out of the City the thousands pour
(Heard you not then St. Saviour's chimes ?)—
Out from the bank, from the mart, the store—

Crowding the river, the bridge, the shore ;
Homeward they hasten, their day's work o'er.
Hear what the bells are ringing !

'Centuries long our pinnacles gray'
(This is the song of St. Saviour's chimes)
'Have watch'd the Bridge as we watch to-day ;
Have seen Old London grow and decay,
And New arise ; now we point you away—
Away to its misty beginning.'

THE LEGEND.

'Long ago, before any bridge was builded across the Thames, was there a ferry.'
Old Chronicle.

'Ah, woe is me ! The boat is gone ;
The night comes on full fast ;
The Thames is broad, the tide is strong,
And cannot be o'er-pass'd !

Two score of miles through woodland roads
Knee-deep in mud I've sped ;
And fain within fair London's walls
This night would lay my head.

Woe worth the day ! I cannot swim
Across that murky tide,
And ne'er a man of mortal mould
Might bridge that river wide.

So I, bereft of board and bed,
Must wander like a ghost
On *Suythé's** banks the live-long night,
Along this doleful coast.'

The traveller by the boat-house stood,
And look'd about him well ;
With wicked words he bann'd his fate—
With words we may not tell.

And as he gaped and glower'd about,
By chance he there espied
The boatman's daughter, fair to see,
Sweet-faced and bashful-eyed.

'O maiden,' cried he, 'help a wight
Much toss'd up and down ;
And pray your father that he may
Him ferry to yon town.'

'Now wit you well, fair sir,' she said,
'I fain would help you so ;
But father is a careful man,
And loud the night winds blow.

* *Suythé*, Surrey.

But yet, methinks, although 'tis late
And dark and rough and cold,
He would you carry if you'd turn
Your silver into gold.

I trow it is a deadly sin
To seek this poor world's pelf;
Alas, my father loves his gains
More than he loves himself.

Yet richer than an alderman
My father is,' quoth she;
'And hath he neither chick nor child
In all the world, save me.'

Now as these twain in converse were,
The boatman did arrive;
Who, when he heard the traveller's case,
Did hard his bargain drive.

But well content the young man went;
'For,' said he, 'though this Charon
A miser be, his daughter is
Sweet as a rose of Sharon.

Nor are her youth and piety
And beauty all her charms;
O, wealth she'll have when he doth lie
In Mother Earth's cold arms.'

And so it was that traveller
Full often from that eve
Did Mary Overs speak unto,
Without her father's leave.

And though within a convent's walls
The maiden had been school'd,
Yet had her heart one tender part,
And that her lover ruled.

Now day by day old Over's greed
Grows greater; and each night
He reckons up his gain, until
His sleep forsakes him quite.

Nor yet to gain alone he plans,
But how to save he tries;
And as he restless turns about
A scheme he doth devise:—

'Were I but dead, my men must fast
Three days; whereby I should
Much spending save in provender.
Alack, how dear is food!'

Miserly thought breeds miserly deed—
Quick-springing crop from poisonous seed.

Mary Overs, with all her beauty,
 All her wit and filial duty,
 Cannot turn him, though she tries.
 See, like a corpse, outstretch'd he lies !
 White the sheet that covers his frame,
 White the grave-cloth ; bright the flame
 Of tapers, burning as is meet,
 Two at his head and two at his feet ;
 While on the bier
 Falls many a tear,
 Which Mary Overs for shame doth shed
 (Shame for the living, not grief for the dead) ;
 But the sturdy churls, a rabble rout,
 When the news is heard, do laugh and shout ;
 And with many a scoff and many a grin,
 They break up the cellar, they break up the bin.
 Good brown ale and wine so clear,
 Carefully stored for many a year,
 Fall they upon and make good cheer ;
 Meat and drink within the house
 Eat they and drink they, and hold a *garowse*,
 (So the legend hath it). Unmannerly boys !
 In the presence of Death to make such a noise—
 Noise that noisier still doth grow,
 As faster the miser's wine doth flow ;
 With shout and jest and song they toast
 Old Overs with three times three ; and boast
 His virtues rare, his constant care
 To get work out of them, foul or fair.
 Louder and louder grows the revel,
 When, lo ! on a sudden each shrieks, 'The D-v-l !'
 See they a ghost or suchlike illusion ?
 Who can describe that scene of confusion—
 Tankards tumbling,
 Feasters stumbling,
 Terror all in one mad mass jumbling.
 There in a sheet old Overs stands,
 Holding a taper in his hands.
 Still had he laid till he could no more ;
 Now, in a rage, doth he ramp and roar,
 Rating them well, till one seizes an oar,
 With the butt-end whereof he strikes him so sore
 On the crown of his head, that, cover'd with gore,
 And as dead as a nail in his own oak door,
 Sinks Overs the ferryman on to the floor.
 Citizens twelve, ere his corpse may rest,
 Sit on his body and hold a 'quest ;
 Citizens twelve in this verdict agree,
 'He caused his own death, therefore—*Felo de se.*'

O, fathers may be miserly,
 And cruel eke and stern ;

But daughters are a grateful folk,
And love them in return.

Right tender-hearted Mary was,
To pious customs used,
And much she sorrow'd that the corpse
Was burial refused.

With grief and terror half distraught
She hasten'd fearfully
Unto St. Saviour's holy shrine
In lonely Bermondsey.

The wooden ferry-house, which stood
Where now a modern block
Of warehouses on either hand
Hides ' Mary Overie's Dock,'*

She left ; and down by silent Thames
She went with weary feet,
Through meadows, where now London Bridge
Stands hard by Tooley-street.

At length she reach'd the abbey fair,
Where pious monks did dwell ;
To whom, with broken voice, the maid
Her bitter woes did tell.

And, as it chanced, that very morn
The Abbot, for to see
His abbey-lands, had gone unto
Old Charlton, Kent, S.E.†

Now men, albeit monks, who ne'er
A daughter's love have known,
Are made of softer stuff, 'twould seem,
Than iron, wood, or stone.

Wherefore, their Abbot being out,
They laid the corpse within
Their sacred ground, and sang a mass
For him who died in sin.

But, after seven days had gone,
The Abbot home did hie ;
Who, meditating 'mong the tombs,
Did a new grave espy.

O, fiercely glow'd his righteous rage
When he the news did learn !
How did his zeal for holy things
His monks' weak folly spurn !

* North of the church, by the side of West-Kent Wharf, may still be seen a little creek bearing this name, to the west of which is an old gateway adjoining certain antiquated wooden buildings.

† 'The manor of Charlton, with its appurts, to the monastery of St. Saviour of Bermondsey, near Southwark' (Dugdale, *Mon.* vol. i. p. 640, Reg. Ross. p. 206).

He had them out, and round about
 The grave they stood ; while he,
 In tones that reach'd their inmost hearts,
 Discoursed full forcibly.

Nor yet alone his anger did
 Express itself in word ;
 At his command that miser's corpse
 Was straightway disinterr'd.

But, be it corpse of murderer
 Or wicked suicide,
 It certain is that, in *some* place,
 It must perforce abide.

Two by two, a goodly band,
 Round the grave abash'd they stand ;
 Reverend father cannot say
 Where old Overs at length may lay :
 There, by that grave, he cannot stay.
 All the brethren stare and gaze
 One at another, and then in amaze
 At the troublesome body ; while, over the wall
 Of unhewn stones, so rough and small,
 The Abbot's donkey, that in his paddock
 Has heard the noise of shovel and mattock,
 Stretches his neck, and catches the eye
 Of Turald, the lay-brother, standing by.
 Fond of a jest is Turald, we think.
 He looks at the ass, and both of them wink.
 ' Reverend father, I beg to suggest,
 As my humble opinion, that it would be best
 To fasten the corpse to the donkey ; the rest
 We might safely intrust to his well-known sagacity.'
 The Abbot, rebuking him for his loquacity,
 Takes his suggestion, and firmly insisteth
 That Dapple, the ass, shall go whither he listeth.

O gray, O gray is Dapple's coat
 And hazel is his eye ;
 With steadfast face and stately pace
 He goes through Bermondsey.

A purpose is a noble thing ;
 And Dapple's well-cut nose—
 So sternly set—a purpose firm,
 With lofty aims, now shows.

The marshy meads, the river wide,
 With solemn step and slow
 He passeth, down the Roman road
 Named Kent-street doth he go.

And there he cometh to a pond—
Call'd Thomas' Watering*
By pilgrims—into which he doth
His loathsome burden fling.

Now on the water's well-worn brink
A gibbet there doth stand ;
A warning to wrong-doers, who
Do sore afflict the land.

It is beneath the fearsome tree
That bears the fruit of sin,
The Abbot's comely ass doth stoop
And slip old Overs in.

* * * * *

Mary's lover, so true and tender,
Pray, what assistance doth he render ?
Mary's lover, so bold and free,
Where, O where, may he chance to be ?
Youth, for ever at the side
Of the maiden you hope to make your bride
When all goes smoothly, what do you say ?
'In all probability, out of the way.'
You've rightly guess'd. When this solemn event
Occurr'd, he was deep in the Hurst of Kent,
And long it was ere the news got down
By messenger, sent from London town ;
But as soon as he heard it, he saddled his steed,
And was off and away at the top of his speed ;
Thinking of Mary, with thoughts so tender,
And how he would be the stay and defender
Of her and her fortune, when, lo ! his horse stumbled
O'er a hard clay rut, and the rider tumbled
On to the road ; by one false step hurl'd
From his animal's back right out of the world.

Within the lonely ferry-house
Fair Mary weeps and prays ;
And counts the hours one by one
Through dreary nights and days.

And there alone she makes her moan,
And for her love doth wait,
And chides the lengthy miles of land
That keep him from her gate.

And Thames may lap his sedgy banks,
And Thames may fall and rise ;
But cold beneath the Kentish clods
Fair Mary's lover lies.

* Prior Linsted is not a very accurate archaeologist : St. Thomas of Canterbury lived and died *after* the Conquest. This, however, is a detail.

And after many days are gone
At length the news she hears :
Ah, who may heal her breaking heart ?
Ah, who may stay her tears ?

'My love is gone ! my life is dead !'
She crieth day and night.
Her flaxen hair is streak'd with gray,
Her face is thin and white.

But when long months have pass'd away,
And all her tears are shed,
She saith, 'I'll serve the living ; thus
I best may mourn the dead.'

Wherefore she in her fair young hands
An oar takes, and the wherry
That once her father's was doth row
Each day across the ferry.

And with the miser's hoarded wealth,
And with her own hard gain,
A house for sisters doth she found,
And for long years maintain.

And Mary and her sisterhood
Do deeds of mercy show
Unto the sick and poor and all
Who suffer any woe.

And though, perchance, another age
May hardly deem her right ;
Yet works she out the best she knows,
According to her light.

And when doth end her useful life
And she doth go up higher,
Her body resteth in a tomb
In Mary Overie's choir.

And Fancy, on All-Hallow's-e'en,
From out the modern block
Of warehouses that strives to hide
St. Mary Overie's Dock,

May see her still the gateway pass,
And go into her wherry,
And oar in hand, with ne'er a sound,
Glide gently o'er the ferry.



THE MOUNTAIN ZOOLOGICAL
AND BOTANICAL GARDEN

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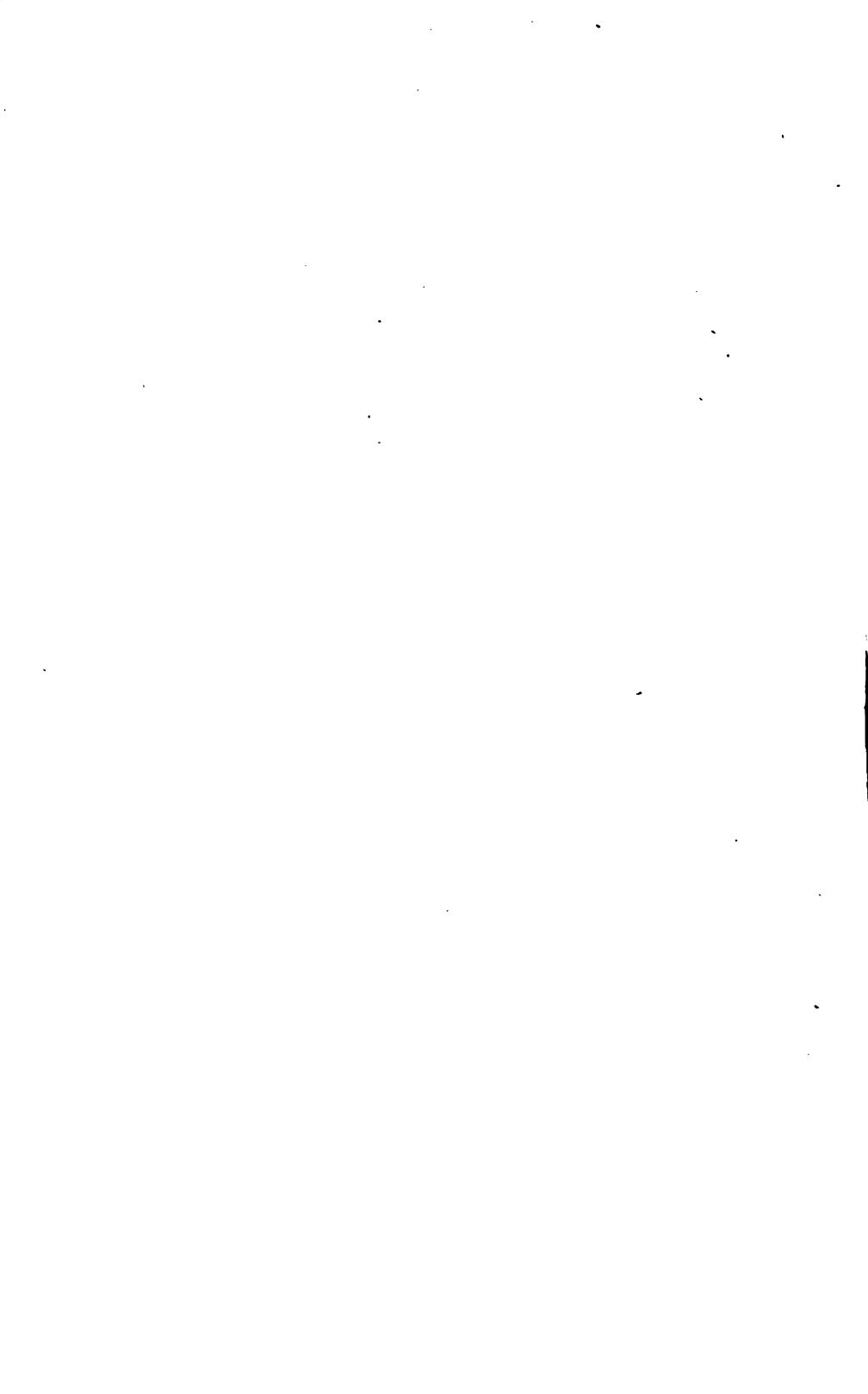
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THE MODERN ZODIAC :
AN ARTIST'S ALMANAC OF ENGLISH SOCIETY,



THE IVY-MAIDEN.

Your face, sweet Constance, and surroundings—
The ivy-wreath that rings you round—
Give full excuse for wild heart-boundings
And voice more tremulous in sound.
But Ivy's maidens 'weep and wring,'
And you love best to laugh and tease;
Methinks some meaning marks the thing—
Ay, ivy means 'Intent to please.'

But, dearest, at this fatal juncture
I own as empty is my purse
As bladder suffering from a puncture;
So, as for better or for worse
I can take no one—or, believe me,
I'd risk my chance of winning you—
Say, child, will you as friend receive me?
Your garland speaks of Friendship true!

What! tears in those blue eyes indignant,
And quivering in those laughing lips?
Was then my proffer so malignant?
Ah, well, the blind boy often trips!
Suppose this New Year saw a twining
Of bridal wreaths for you and me,
I think 'twould know of no repining:
Green ivy means 'Fidelity.'

O sweet New Year! O sweet beginning
Of strange new life to either soul!
O sudden start, triumphant winning,
The start of life, and yet its goal!
Sweet Constance, with thine ivy-wreathing,
Be to thine own surroundings true;
Nay, blush not at this whisper'd breathing
That ivy tells of Marriage too!

B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING.

THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.

CHAPTER I.

LA PETITE.

THE old Château des Sapinières, in the pleasant province of Anjou, stands looking across its broad terrace and the garden which has replaced the old courtyard, down into a landscape with green trees, grass with sheep feeding, a flash of water beyond, and a distance full of lovely varied tints. It is a water-colour picture, waiting for an artist to carry it away; soft and clear, the light masses of foliage lying peacefully on the blue air that surrounds and peeps through and shadows them.

But Mdle. de Saint-Hilaire was no artist at all, and she was not thinking of the view as she stood on the terrace that afternoon, gazing into the distance, with the silent old house behind her. It was early in September, and a great sun was baking down on the weather-beaten walls. All the pink-and-white sunblinds were down, shading the lower windows, and the white shutters were closed above. Now and then a sound of voices made its way from the salon to the girl's ears, as she stood by the balustrade of the terrace, quite out of hearing of any words—a solitary figure, with a short straight shadow on the gravel, in a little buff gown and a large shady hat. In a yard to the left of the house a carriage was drawn up near the coach-house, under the shade of a large chestnut-tree. The coachman on his box might have been asleep, he sat so still, and the horses stood

hanging their heads: they were old and fat, and glad of a rest in the middle of their journey. But a clock in the house struck four, and, as if a spell was broken, everything began to move. The horses woke up suddenly, came round at a slow trot, and stopped before the broad terrace steps; a poodle with long gray ears rushed out of the house and barked; Mdle. de Saint-Hilaire started, turned round, and hurried in with quick graceful movements. After a few minutes two ladies appeared, still deep in talk, and advanced slowly across the terrace towards the carriage. They were both elderly women. The visitor was the younger of the two, short and plain-featured, but with something about her both pleasant and distinguished.

'Then I am not to see la petite to-day?' said she. 'Well, perhaps it is better that we should not meet again till things are decided. I leave the affair in your hands—it could not be better placed—and I shall anxiously expect an answer.'

'I think I can promise you a good one,' said Madame de Saint-Hilaire. She was a tall, thin, upright old woman, who carried a long stick, and wore a black straw hat on her thick gray hair. 'I have always found my granddaughter reasonable enough. She will feel as I do, that monsieur votre fils does her a very great honour.'

'Du tout, du tout. You are very amiable to say so,' said the younger lady. 'And when do

you expect your English relations?

'This afternoon. They will be here in an hour or two.'

'Indeed! I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing them. I have seen so little of the English—a very interesting nation. Are they handsome, these young people that are coming to you?'

'I really cannot tell you. I have not seen them since they were children.'

'Ah, par exemple! Adieu, madame—à revoir!'

The visitor got into her carriage, and the horses went trotting slowly off round the sweep and away through the trees in the direction of the high-road.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire went back into the house, followed by her poodle, and called 'Marie!' on which her granddaughter came stepping lightly down the wide oak stairs into the hall.

'Come out to the bench. The sun is not so hot now, and I want to speak to you.'

Some of the large trees that grew below the terrace were beginning to throw a kindly shade across the yellow gravel and the white bench under the house wall. Any one at the library window above could have heard all that was said here; but the old lady and her granddaughter lived alone at the château, and their servants were all safe at the other end of the house.

'I told you that I had exchanged letters with Mme. de Rochemar about you,' said the Comtesse, stroking her dog's curly head with her stick, and glancing at the girl beside her with a little anxiety.

'Yes, grandmother,' said Marie quietly.

She sat with her head and eyes drooped, smiling faintly; a slenderly made little person, with

delicate aquiline features and soft pensive dark eyes. She looked like the last of a long race of fine ladies and gentlemen, with the shadow of their sins, perhaps, on her devout Catholic conscience, and the brightness of their wit lingering about her finely-cut lips.

'She has a very high opinion of you,' Mme. de Saint-Hilaire went on. 'She proposes that you should be married to her eldest son. She assures me that it is also his wish, that he has the most agreeable recollection of you, and hopes earnestly for your consent. You have not forgotten him, I suppose?'

'I remember M. le Marquis very well,' said Marie. 'He gave me a very pretty bonbonnière. I have it still. But is he come back from Algeria?'

'No; but his mother expects him very soon. You are fortunate, my child, to meet with such a good parti. Mme. de Rochemar tells me that this has been her intention for years, and nothing but your bad health, mon amie, kept her from speaking to me sooner. One must be glad to be connected with such a family as hers. There are few that hold a better position. Their fortune is large, their châteaux are fine, they are loyal and religious, and there could not be a person of more excellent character than Louis de Rochemar. You accept his offer, then, mon enfant, with gratitude?'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire talked on with great satisfaction, but there was a shade of doubt too in her strong handsome face, and she still looked anxiously at the weak slight girl beside her. Perhaps she knew that Marie's chief weakness lay in her delicate looks. A girl with the blood of the old noblesse in her veins, and whose ancestors had died in the Revolution, was not likely to be without

strength of some kind—if it was only self-will.

'Mme. de Rochemar loves you, ma petite, as if you were her own daughter,' said the Comtesse.

'She is very good,' said Marie gently. 'Yes, if I must be married, grandmother, if you will not let me stay with you, M. de Rochemar pleases me as well as any one I have seen. If it *must* be,' she repeated, suddenly looking up into her grandmother's face.

'Yes, it must be,' said the old woman in answer. 'You are my only heir, and those other Saint-Hilaires shall never have my estates. Allons! the affair is settled. Embrasse-moi, Marie.'

The girl took up her grandmother's hand and touched it with her lips. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire laid her other hand on her shoulder, and kissed her affectionately on both cheeks.

'I shall have great pleasure in writing our answer to Mme. de Rochemar,' she said.

CHAPTER II.

AN ADVENTURE AT LE MANS.

WHILE the sun was shining down on Les Sapinières in its quiet cheerfulness, and while little Marie de Saint-Hilaire's thoughts were quite taken up with the prospect of being Marquise de Rochemar one of these days, her English connections were on their way from Paris, and, having a couple of hours to wait at Le Mans, had wandered off to look at the town and the cathedral. Notre Dame de la Couture attracted them first, with its two unfinished Norman towers, its great open west front, the graceful arcade above, and the noble stone carvings in the archway.

Frank Wyatt pulled out his sketch-book, and stayed in the

court leading up to the bare, strange, rather sad old church, while his brother and sister went in, walked up the nave and round the silent chancel, dived into the crypt, tried to study the history of that Jeanne whose tombstone is set against the wall there, poked and peered about in the darkness in true English fashion. They decided that after all there was not much to be seen, and hurried off to tell Frank so, and to drag him on to the cathedral. As they came out under that great open archway, leaving the dark shady church behind them, and advancing into the white sunshine that glowed on the paving-stones, they met two ladies face to face. Behind these ladies was the intense blue sky, hard, clear, like the background of an illumination. The younger lady's beautiful fair hair escaped in some curls under her hat; the light shone through them, and they glittered like an aureole as she walked into the church with free decided steps; a tall, upright, noble-looking girl, like an angel in some old Italian picture.

'Johnny, what a lovely girl!' said Miss Wyatt.

'Yes,' said Johnny rather absently. 'Her mother was very handsome too,' he went on after a moment.

'How do you know it was her mother?'

'By the likeness, of course. Look, there's Frank with a priest talking to him.'

When they reached their brother the priest had turned and walked off in another direction, his black skirts clinging to his legs.

'What is the use of staying here?' demanded Frank. 'That little abbé says the cathedral is magnificent. We must get on there at once. It is an immense distance.'



ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
VOLUME LXXV. PART 1. 1905.

Published by the
Royal Anthropological Institute.

London: Printed by the Royal Society.
1905.

Price, 10s. 6d. per volume.
Single parts, 2s. 6d.

Subscription price, 10s. 6d. per annum.
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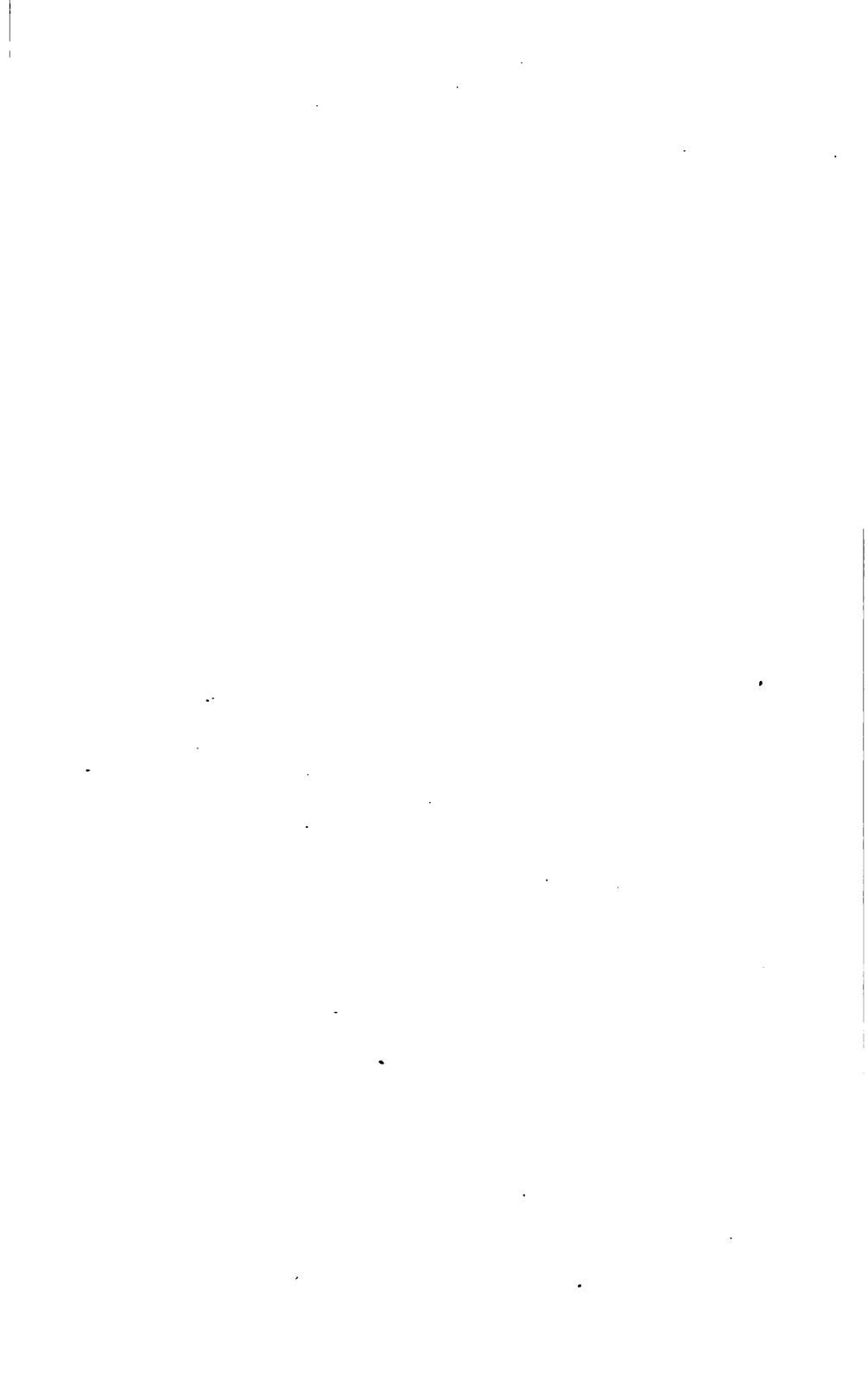
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'The girl took up her grandmother's hand and touched it with her lips.'—p. 52.



'Then you can't walk,' said his sister.

'Thank you, I can.'

The three marched off together through the narrow streets, passing all kinds of quaint shop-windows, at which the young men would stop and look in, though their wiser sister begged them to remember that time had a limit and trains would not wait; across baking little 'places,' paved with round stones, climbing up, up, higher and higher, with at last a glimpse of the cathedral to help them on. O, that last delicious bit of street!—beetling, dirty, picturesque; painted figures, carvings on the houses, doorways with the touch of grace and beauty that those old builders gave to everything; perfect old women screaming to each other from the doorsteps, equally appropriate children playing in the gutter. Frank Wyatt, standing still in the middle of this street, tried to say something on sanitary matters, but broke off to admire the nearest house-front. His sister, less theoretical and more practical, hurried up the street as fast as she could, exclaiming, 'How delightful, how quaint! Johnny, do come along; let us get out of this. We shall have no time for the cathedral.'

It was strange to see how all that dirt and squalor crept up to the very brow of the hill, crouched under the very eaves of the great cathedral, as it stood crowning the height, a dream in stone; its graceful flying buttresses cutting the sky, its windows and arches, roofs and gurgoyles and pinnacles soaring very near heaven, breathing praise, gathering the prayers and sighs of its poor neighbours, and carrying them with its own rich offering into a purer air. These young English people, as they walked up the stately nave, were making a pilgrimage to the

grave of an English queen. Be-rengaria, Cœur de Lion's dear and beautiful wife, lies in the south transept of the cathedral. Standing by her effigy, one looks up the narrow side aisles of the choir; they are full of rosy light. There is silence in the church, except a distant footfall echoing on the stone. It is a fit and peaceful resting-place for the noble Plantagenet queen.

There were sure to be some lines, or arches, or effects of light and shade, that had to find their way into Frank's book. His sister, who was hot and tired, came and sat down on a straw chair beside him, looking over him, while their younger brother wandered away by himself. These three agreed very well in their journeys together. Frank settled their plans and directed everything; Agnes, who was the eldest and plainest of the three, carried out the plans and took all the trouble, except when Johnny woke to the necessity of helping her. She admired her brothers heartily, especially, of course, Frank; though I suspect that she loved Johnny the better of the two.

The time stole away in the solemn cathedral. Frank's clever pencil worked on; the pink light changed and faded a little. Very soon it was time to go back to the station, and the two walked out together to the porch; but no Johnny was to be seen. Frank sat down there, while Agnes hurried back into the church, calling him in a low voice, flying with quick steps up and down the aisles. As she approached the choir, and was stretching her neck anxiously to look for him, a priest, with a round good-natured face, came down and asked her if she had lost anything.

'I am looking for my brother, monsieur,' said Agnes.

'How was it you lost monsieur votre frère?' she asked, smiling. And Agnes told her all about it, still looking a little sad and distraite.

Johnny lost! It seemed like a horrible dream. Not to know where he was, when two or three hours ago he had been walking by her side in that funny narrow street, and under the glorious arches of the cathedral!

Little Marie was very kind and sympathising; threw up her hands and nodded her head while Agnes told her story.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, as she entertained Frank, glanced from one to the other, and came to her own conclusions. She had a very great fancy for good looks, and a young man with a face and figure like Frank's did not much need any further recommendation. The best type of Englishman, she decided; and who should know better what an Englishman ought to be? for her first cousin and great friend had married these young people's grandfather, one of the handsomest and most charming of men. This descendant of his was very like him: tall and upright, with a sort of easy grace about him; a regular handsome face, fair hair with a decided dash of yellow, clear quick blue eyes, and quite the air of what he was—a soldier and a gentleman. Frank had walked over the course, and won the old French lady's heart without any trouble or exertion. His sister was hardly so fortunate. Certainly she had a good figure, dressed well, and looked like a lady; but her face was plain, her complexion nothing particular, and she looked sad, puzzled, and downcast, and almost as if she wished herself somewhere else.

'Stupid!' thought Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'I thought they told me she was full of intelli-

gence. But perhaps the poor thing is anxious about her brother.'

CHAPTER III.

JOHNNY.

THEY were sitting on the terrace after dinner in a flood of moonlight. The old white stone balustrade, with the masses of ivy hanging over it, gleamed like marble. The moon looked down at them over the trees on the left; she and all the stars seemed to shine with an intense brightness unknown in more northern skies. The owls hooted in the still clear air, answering each other from tree to tree. Peloton took no notice of them at all, but sat wisely on his hind legs beside Mdle. Marie, who fed him with bits of sugar soaked in coffee, as a reward for the tricks he had been displaying for the strangers.

Old Jacques had brought out coffee on a little table under the library window; and there, where Marie had heard her fate that afternoon, she was sitting in the midst of the group, smiling and very cheerful, trying, as Frank and her grandmother did most of the talking, and all Agnes's senses were absorbed in listening for bells in the distance, to remember exactly what M. de Rochemar was like. Short, she was afraid, and altogether a very different-looking person from this tall Englishman; but, after all, what did that matter, and what business had she to be comparing the two? Somebody had told her once that people with titles and fine estates need never trouble themselves about the want of good looks, and of course that was true. Englishmen, she believed, were generally poor, and more or less

'bourgeois' in their extraction ; if that was the case, poor things, what good fortune for them to be handsome ! She glanced across at Frank, who happened just then to be looking at her. The moonlight gave a charming refinement to his handsome face, which was a little thinned and softened by recent illness. Marie returned to Peloton with affection, taking his curly head between her hands, and gazing into his good brown eyes. 'Peloton, tu es mort !' said she then, trying weakly to make him resume his tricks ; but the sensible dog knew she did not mean it, and took no notice whatever.

'Are your brothers like each other, Agnes?' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'No, matante, not at all. Johnny is not so tall as Frank, and a good deal darker. I don't think any one would ever know they were brothers. But I heard you saying that Frank was like a soldier, and I am sure you will think Johnny like a sailor. Ah, don't I hear the carriage coming?'

'What quick ears you have ! Yes ; but it is not nearly at the church yet. Now suppose he does not come.'

'We must go back to Le Mans to-morrow, and look for him,' said Agnes.

She got up and walked to the top of the steps, standing there to listen. Marie and Peloton followed her, and the poodle plunged down the steps, and rushed barking into the bushes, in pursuit of some imaginary trespasser. The bells came presently jingling up. Jacques appeared from the house, the horses stopped, stout good-humoured Auguste looked down smiling from his box.

'Ah ! C'est ça—le voici !' said old Jacques, as he opened the carriage-door.

Johnny jumped out, quite awake, and hurried up the steps.

'Here you are !' said Agnes, seizing his arm to make quite sure of his reality.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire came forward to meet him. She could not be anything but kind and hospitable, and she accepted the young man's earnest apologies with a smile. Not that Johnny said much, but what he did say he evidently meant ; and I think Mme. de Saint-Hilaire understood this, though he did not make half so many excuses for himself as his brother had made for him.

'I beg your pardon. It was extremely kind of you to send for me. I'm so sorry you did. I managed to miss the train, you see.'

'Don't speak of it. It does not matter in the least,' said the Comtesse kindly. 'We were a little anxious about you, that was the worst of it ; and I am afraid you have distressed yourself a great deal with very little cause.'

'But how on earth did you manage to do it, Johnny?' said Frank.

'O, I lost my way,' and Johnny turned round to make a low bow to Marie.

'Let me present you to my granddaughter,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'Johnny !' said Agnes, coming up behind him. 'My dear, what have you done to your coat?'

'My coat?'

'It is torn half across the shoulders. Have you been fighting?'

Everybody laughed, gently and politely, for Johnny began to laugh himself.

'O, an accident. I'll tell you about it some day.'

'Now you must come in and have some dinner ; and in the

mean while you can tell us your adventures,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

Johnny began protesting, like a sailor or a schoolboy, that he did not want any dinner; but she took him into the house, and presently left him with his sister and Jacques to take care of him in the *salle-à-manger*.

The old servant went in and out. Agnes sat with her elbows on the table, and gazed smilingly at her brother.

'I am uncommonly hungry, though,' he said. 'What a jolly room this is!'

It was picturesque, with its brown painted walls and shiny floor, and long curtains of rich mixed colours at the two windows. A shaded lamp was hanging over a round table heaped with fruit and flowers. Old Jacques brought in dish after dish, and handed them to the young traveller, who did justice to everything.

'Johnny, now do tell me what happened to you, and how you managed to tear yourself like that,' said Agnes imploringly.

'It's a long story. I don't know where to begin.'

'At the beginning, of course. What did you do when you went out of the cathedral?'

'Walked down the street. Do you remember seeing some photographs in a shop-window? There was one of that old church we went into first.'

'Yes. What has that to do with you?'

'Well, I thought I'd go and get it. I can't sit for hours in a church, like you and Frank. I suppose I dawdled about rather. At any rate I never got as far as that shop—not then, at least, for I went afterwards. Here it is.'

He pulled out a photograph of the west front of the old

church, and threw it to his sister.

'That's Nature, you see. I call that better than Frank's pencil-scratches, don't you?'

'Well, as to that—it is a very good one. Go on. What did you do?'

'As I went down the street,' said Johnny slowly and quietly, going on with his dinner, 'I met a carriage and horses coming up at full gallop. Two ladies inside, and nobody on the box, and some people running behind. I thought I might as well stop the horses, so I ran and got hold of them. They were difficult to stop just at first; and I suppose in hanging on my jacket got torn.'

'That was you,' said Agnes, under her breath, half laughing, and yet with her eyes full of tears.

'It was awkward for the ladies,' Johnny went on. 'They sat like two Britons, without saying a word. Who do you think they were?'

'Those two we saw going into the church?'

'Yes. That was clever of you. Did you see them afterwards?'

'No; but we heard of the accident as we came down from the cathedral. Nobody seemed able to imagine who stopped the horses, unless it was one of the saints out of the church-windows. We heard that the ladies were dreadfully vexed at not being able to thank him. What became of you, Johnny?'

'I cut away as soon as I possibly could, down one of the streets, and managed to lose myself somehow. Did you happen to hear their names?'

'Madame and Mademoiselle de Valmont.'

'Well, whatever their name was, they behaved grandly.'

Johnny seemed quite happy and satisfied in his admiration of

the two brave Frenchwomen, and his sister knew better than to say anything more about his part in the business. They went back together into the salon, where they found the others. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire was sitting in a large chair near the piano, and Frank and Marie were turning over a heap of music. Just as Agnes and Johnny came in, Marie took her place on the music-stool, and began playing a polka. Her small fingers jumped in a funny staccato style from one end of the keys to the other. Frank stood and watched her, his tall figure reflected in several mirrors; Agnes took a chair close by; and Johnny sat down by the round table in the middle of the room, and began turning over an illustrated paper that was lying there, not at all conscious that Mme. de Saint-Hilaire was inspecting him, as the lamplight fell on his face.

Decidedly plain, she thought; and yet there was a certain picturesqueness. A squarish face, with short and by no means handsome features; a skin burnt by all possible weathers to a dark reddish-brown, a tinge of brickdust red on his moustache and the ends of his hair; broad shoulders; a figure awkwardly strong and square, and not tall enough, though by no means to be called short. Then came the redeeming features of this rough exterior. Large gentle gray eyes, with long lashes curling like a girl's—beautiful eyes, if they had not been too sleepy and indifferent; and a quantity of soft waving brown hair, with a red light on it, as if it had been just caught by the sun. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire saw all this as she looked at Johnny, and a little modified her first estimate of him as an ugly, awkward, boorish young man. Still, of course, no one

could help feeling his vast inferiority to his brother. Here was Frank, with a charming smile, taking Marie's place at the piano, and singing with a very fine accent, for an Englishman, the 'Valse des Adieux.'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire turned round in her chair to give her whole attention, and listened with a great deal of pleasure and approval.

Marie, sitting by Agnes, exclaimed, 'Charmant—charmant !' half under her breath, and gently clapped her hands.

CHAPTER IV.

ON MARRIAGES.

MADAME DE SAINT-HILAIRE'S château lay on the eastern slope of one of the pretty valleys of Anjou. From the road that passed through the village, on the other side of the river, you saw its square solid towers, with their steep gray roofs standing up among surrounding trees. Green meadows, full of wild flowers, went sloping down to the stream. Along its banks, and all about the lower ground, there were rows and plantations of poplar, Swiss, black, and white, their tall slim stems and light silvery foliage brightening up the green all round as they stood against the background of the larger and darker trees. There were plenty of these too—oaks, elms, chestnuts, walnuts, and the graceful-leaved acacia, and the alanthus with its bunches of red keys.

On the other side of the château were several large old yards, with long ranges of white buildings, and great square gateways connecting them. Here there was always something going on, for the Comtesse farmed her own estate, and employed a great many people.

Behind the house was the old 'allée de plaisance,' where apple- and walnut-trees grew in great numbers; but the grass was rough, and the old pleasure-ground was chiefly used now as an approach to the walled fruit-garden at the further end. Up on the slopes beyond were the 'sapinières' themselves, the fir and pine woods, covering many acres; below them, and round behind the farmyard, lay the vineyards, sloping to the south and south-west.

It was altogether a picturesque old place, with the remains of former strength to be found everywhere—in fragments of wall, foundations of towers, all gone now except the two corner tourelles with round pointed roofs, thick walls, and gun-holes, between which you now drove up to the front of the house.

Agnes opened her window wide that morning, and looked out into the summer brightness and peacefulness. The flowers were all shining in the sun, that came to them over the farm-buildings and the acacia branches; a dog was barking somewhere; a woman in a round white cap and a short blue jacket and petticoat, with a long stick in her hand, came driving some cows across from the yard to the lower meadows. One of them tried to run up among some trees by the side of the road; she shouted out an inquiry why it always persisted in going where it ought not; the creature was ashamed of itself, and hurried back to its companions. Then Mme. de Saint-Hilaire appeared on the terrace, and Agnes took her hat and went down-stairs to join her. Her aunt, as she called her, received her very kindly.

'You can come with me to my garden,' she said; 'I am going to gather fruit.'

So Agnes took a large basket

out of her hand, and they went off together through sunshine and shade along the wild allée to the garden at its further end.

As they went Mme. de Saint-Hilaire asked Agnes a great many questions about her home and her family. She considered herself quite perfect in her knowledge of English life, having once spent two months with her cousin, soon after she married these young people's grandfather.

'She was married in the year '19,' said she, 'and I was with her in '24, when your father was a child of four years old. We were very gay; we went to many parties, danced at balls, enjoyed ourselves. English life has many pleasures for young girls; I had a great fancy for it then. I thought there was no marriage like an English marriage. I can well remember all I felt on that subject.'

'My grandmother's was an English marriage, was it not?' said Agnes.

'Yes, indeed. She met your grandfather in Paris in those happy days when we had a king. They met at a ball; and I may tell you, my dear, as you are English, and accustomed to such things, that they loved each other at first sight. M. Wyatt contrived to inform Mdlle. de Magny of his devotion. She, in answer, begged him to address himself to her parents; which he did, and after a little delay they consented. He was only just in time, for they were on the point of arranging a marriage for her with M. Paul de Jolivet. But they were affectionate parents, and not unwilling that she should be happy in her own way. I was much attached to your great-grandfather, my uncle De Magny; but I must confess to you that I had a prejudice against M. Wyatt. I had no sisters, and Léontine, my dearest

friend, was taken away from me to another country. I liked him afterwards, however, and visited them with great pleasure not long before my own marriage. I saw them again, with your father and mother and yourselves, when you were all staying at Boulogne.'

'Yes,' said Agnes, 'I have always so much wished to see more of you.'

'You are very amiable, my dear child. It is a great happiness to me to have you all here. And now tell me about your very charming elder brother. Has he quite recovered from his illness?'

'He is not really strong yet,' said Agnes. 'It was rheumatic fever, you know. But the doctor said that such a change as this would be of the greatest use to him. He had a year's leave, and he has got six months' extension because of his illness, so I hope he will get thoroughly well. He is a very nice invalid, for he can always amuse himself; he is so clever in all sorts of ways. I don't think I could mention anything he cannot do.'

'You are very proud of him, no doubt,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'And your brother John, he is not quite so remarkable?'

'I am not sure,' said Agnes thoughtfully.

The old lady glanced at her, with a slightly incredulous smile.

'Here we are at the garden,' she said. 'Open the gate, if you please. Now you shall cut what fruit I tell you, for I am not young enough to stoop much. The peaches are this way.'

There was a fountain in the middle of the garden, and round it grew great beds of zinnias, scarlet, purple, crimson, orange, with their silky leaves and gold centre crowns turned up to the sun. The apple and pear-trees in the garden were loaded with fruit; there were

tall castor-oil plants growing, and a tobacco plant or two, and several other strange things unfamiliar to English eyes. The white trellised walls all round were covered with fruit: peaches, red and golden; great heavy bunches of purple and white grapes, on which happy insects were already beginning to feast themselves; bright nectarines; figs, hidden among their leaves. Agnes and her aunt went round the walls. The Comtesse pointed with her long stick, and Agnes gathered obediently into her basket, and grew so lively and enthusiastic among the wonderful fruit that madame was quite pleased with her, and thought that after all she had a bright face, and her hair was a pretty colour and beautifully dressed. Somehow they did not go on with the subject of Johnny, for Agnes was not quite at home with this old French relation of hers, and felt inclined to let her take all the lead in the conversation. But when, the basket having become tolerably heavy, and a bunch of zinnias having been laid on the vine-leaves above the fruit, they were slowly making their way back to the house, Mme. de Saint-Hilaire went back to the subject of marriages, in which she naturally supposed that a young Anglaise must be interested.

'My friends will not believe me,' she said, 'when I assure them that the English never marry except for love. It astonishes them wonderfully.'

.'But is it so, do you think, ma tante?' said Agnes doubtfully.

'Mais certainement! When such a thing happens in France, which of course it does now and then, we call it a *mariage Anglais*. There are merits no doubt in both. We must follow the fashion of our country. In a French marriage

all is carefully arranged; and if the demoiselle herself has not so much voice in it, everything is done for her by those who know her and love her best. Now in England, where a young girl settles these things for herself, how many mistakes are made!

'Perhaps so. But there is much more happiness.'

'That depends upon what we call happiness. Now my little Marie, I have not a doubt that she will be happy, for it has been my object to make her so. I have made a marriage for her with the eldest son of my friend the Marquise de Rochemar.'

'Indeed!' said Agnes, much astonished, for it had never occurred to her that the odd little demoiselle with her pale curious face could possibly be engaged to be married. 'And does she like him? Is she happy?'

'She does not know much about that yet,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, smiling. 'It was only arranged yesterday, and she has not seen M. de Rochemar for some years. But she must like him. He is very amiable and very sensible. I have the highest opinion of him.'

'You let me say what I please, my dear aunt, and you understand that I take an English view,' said Agnes bravely. 'I must confess that such an engagement, if it were to the greatest hero on earth, would make me very miserable.'

'It is possible. But, my dear, you must also forgive me for saying that you Englishwomen have not well-regulated minds. It is not your fault, but that of your bringing up. You have not our strong sense of duty. With us a Christian woman loves her husband as a matter of course because he is her husband—loves her children because they are her

children, and does her duty to all. Some malheureuses, of course, go astray, allow their minds to wander to other objects. That, however, is no one's fault but their own.'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire laid this down with some decision.

'On the contrary,' thought Agnes, 'it is the fault of those who marry them to the wrong person;' but they were reaching the house, and as Marie was just engaged she considered that argument would be useless. So she held her peace.

Breakfast was at eleven o'clock. The polished walnut table reflected the fruits and flowers, which seemed to be piled upon it as if there was no room for them all. The shutters of the front window were closed, and into the half-darkened room the inhabitants came one by one, in different stages of liveliness. Frank looked pale, and confessed that he was tired. Johnny let out quietly that he had been all round the place, and had caught some fish in the little river. Mdlle. Marie seemed to her English cousin, who had just heard such interesting news about her, to look rather wistful and indifferent, even perhaps a little cross. Her dark hair grew low on her sensitive white forehead, which she wrinkled up in a distressed sort of way. Old Jacques's ways seemed to fidget her; she would eat hardly any breakfast, and sat looking small and pensive in her buff-cambric gown. Her grandmother did not notice this at all, and entertained her guests with a healthy cheerfulness which one sees almost oftener in the old than in the young. At seventy, Mme. de Saint-Hilaire had more spirits and more strength than Marie at twenty-four.

Poor Marie! Agnes Wyatt, who was very romantic, quite put

herself into those little high-heeled shoes, and was filled with immense pity and sympathy at the thought of how she should feel in such a state of things. She supposed her mind was ill-regulated, as the Comtesse, with something less than French politeness, had told her. But however that might be, she was certainly old enough to have a mind of her own of some sort, and opinions of her own, though in some people's eyes they might be wrong ones, and she was pretty sure that her mother in England would agree with her in thinking this a dreadful thing. 'I am sure she is unhappy,' she thought. 'She looks quite pale and sad. How can I save her?' The answer to this question did not at once arrive.

In the mean time Marie was almost cross to old Jacques, who, after handing her several dishes in vain, half appealed to his mistress: '*Mademoiselle ne mange rien.*'

'*Merci! Non, vous dis-je!*' said the young lady, as she impatiently waved away the approaching *perdreux*, which seemed inclined to persevere. '*Non, grand'mère, je n'en veux pas,*' she said, with a faint smile across the table.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire did not attempt much remonstrance, and afterwards told Agnes that Marie had been in bad health for years, and that it was a wonder to see her eat anything at all, especially at breakfast.

As they stood in the great darkened salon, where long lines of light streamed through the nearly closed shutters across the floor, throwing rays into the mirrors, and catching the old china and the quaint carving of the chairs, the Comtesse called Frank, and asked if he was inclined for a drive that afternoon, to see some of her neighbours. 'I can take you all

four,' she said, 'if your brother will sit on the box with the coachman.'

Frank thanked her very much, but thought he had better keep quiet to-day. It was a great disappointment to him, but he had been foolish in dragging up the hill at Le Mans the day before.

'Agnes should have kept you in better order,' said the old lady. 'Do as you think best for yourself. Agnes, Marie, Jean, will you be ready at three o'clock?'

Marie followed her grandmother out of the room; Johnny, who had already made friends with the cook, went off to talk to her about his fish; and Agnes went up to her elder brother, who had thrown himself into a chair.

'Did you hear how Johnny tore his jacket?' she said.

'Not a word.'

'I wonder we did not guess it at the time. That boy is always doing brave things, and getting no credit for them,' and she told Johnny's story, at which Frank smiled.

'Of course, just like him. A great piece of luck for Mme. Whoever-she-was that he happened to be there. However, I think the sooner he gives up stopping other people's runaway horses, the better for him. One of these days he will get something worse than a torn jacket.'

'He wouldn't be Johnny if he did not do those things.'

'Wouldn't he?' said Frank.

'I have something else to tell you, Frank,' said his sister.

But just then Marie de Saint-Hilaire came back into the room, and the news of her sad fate had to be kept and brooded over for the present in the sympathising soul of Agnes.

CHAPTER V.

CHATEAU LAURON.

THEY drove in an open carriage along a magnificent road, wide, smooth, and perfectly firm, not a loose stone to be seen on its fine brown surface. It ran like a line of light between thick dark woods, in the deeper part of which Mme. de Saint-Hilaire told them that there were wolves and wild boars and deer of different kinds. Johnny wondered if he should come in for any hunting; but she said it was very unlikely at this time of year, though one of the gentlemen in the province had the right to kill wild beasts all the year round, being in special charge of them, with the title of 'Lieutenant Louvetier.'

Beyond the woods there came a hill, and a great wide view with more woods in the distance, with two or three church spires and villages, and here and there the towers of a château standing up clear and bright among green fields and vineyards. In that transparent air they could see a long way, to blue hills in the far distance; and all the nearer touches of colour—trees, flowers, cottage roofs, yellow pumpkins, grapes already purple—stood out in the sunlit landscape as if it had been a great pre-Raphaelite picture. Now and then they passed people on the road, walking, or driving the long carts of the country, sometimes drawn by strong oxen with bent heads and a yoke across their horns. The people looked up and nodded a friendly 'bon jour,' and Johnny, seeing that it was expected of him, pulled off his hat diligently to everybody they passed.

'What nice-looking people you have about here!' said Agnes.

'They are not nearly so handsome as in some parts of France,'

said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire; 'but they are very good people. Of course we have some bad republican characters, but they are not worth thinking of. They are black sheep, not at all respectable, and nobody takes any notice of them. Do you see all this wide plain? It was formerly a great forest, and was destroyed in the wars with the English. That old stone cross in the middle of the vineyard yonder marks the site of a battle.'

'This has not been a peaceful country,' said Agnes.

'No, indeed. And even now no one ever knows when the Red Republicans may rise, and bring another deluge of misery over our poor country. I could almost say that they would be worse than the Germans.'

Agnes was beginning to ask some question about the war, but Marie, who had recovered her temper by this time, leaned forward and seized her with both hands.

'You must not talk about the war,' she said. 'It was like an awful dream. It makes my grandmother ill to remind her of it. Some time, when she is not with us, you may ask me questions, and I will tell you about it.'

'Thank you,' said Agnes.

Past the great bare hill and the plain they came into a quieter, more homelike country; passed through a little quaint village, then between gardens and meadows where cows were feeding by the side of a stream. The meadows had no gates, and women and children sat watching the cows as they grazed. Sometimes dogs, with rough bristly hair, rushed out and barked fiercely at the carriage. Then the road went winding along a shady green valley with wooded slopes, the same little stream running, and poplar- and chestnut-

trees growing on the banks. Beyond that there was a poplar avenue by the water-side, such an avenue as one sees in a dream. The trees stood close together in an unbroken row along each side of the road, which was narrow here, though still smooth and good. The gray stems and the delicate foliage went up, up, tapering straight and slender to the sky, so tall that their tops as you looked up seemed close together, with only the narrowest line of blue between; the carriage and horses were like small things creeping on the ground as they went under them.

'This is something like a cathedral,' said Johnny, as he sat and looked back along the receding avenue. 'It gives one an idea of one's real size.'

'Yes, it is beautiful,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'It is on my friend M. de Valmont's property. He is very proud of it, and wishes it was nearer to his house.'

A flash of life and interest sprang into Johnny's eyes. He glanced at Agnes, who began to regret that she had not made an opportunity to tell their aunt about his adventure yesterday. She did not dare do it now in his presence, and thought that, as things had gone so far, it would be fun to wait and see if the rescued ladies told the story themselves, and if they would recognise Johnny as their rescuer.

For the last two or three miles the country was wilder again, the fields were steep and rocky, here and there rough little commons covered with bracken and gorse stretched away from the road, and heather just beginning to fade from its purple richness lay like a sunset cloud on the sides of the hills. Then they saw a great dark wood in front of them, and standing up before it, with arched

avenues leading to it and green lawns about it, was an immense building with towers and soaring roofs and many windows, like a castle in a fairy-tale, high exalted and gazing alone over the vassal country that lay humbly sloping up to its feet.

'There is Château Lauron,' said Marie, leaning forward.

'It is magnificent,' said Agnes. 'What an immense house!'

Johnny said nothing, but looked silently at those great towers.

'You do not often see anything so fine as that in England,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'What do you think of it, Monsieur Johnny?'

She was a little provoked by his quiet way of taking things, and put it down to that thoroughly English frame of mind which, feeling the value of its own opinion, won't rashly give it in favour of any new thing, however beautiful.

'It is a very fine old place,' said Johnny. 'No, I never saw anything quite like it before.'

They drove up the avenue, and round the wild open lawns, unenclosed, and looking as if the wolves from the woods would come down when they pleased and prowl about the house-door. There were no flowers, except a few blossoming shrubs that clustered under the great rugged walls, and under the double flight of steps that went up in a curve to the door. There were three square high-roofed towers, and corps de logis between them and extending beyond them in a long uneven line.

The whole family belonging to this stately old place was standing on the steps as Mme. de Saint-Hilaire and her party drove up: M. and Mme. de Valmont, their daughter, and two sons in shooting-coats. The gentlemen came with their hats in their hands to

open the carriage-door and help the ladies out. Johnny Wyatt, who had jumped out first, also stood hatless, and gravely returned such bows as were directed to him. Seeing M. de Valmont bend over the Comtesse's hand, and raise it gently to his lips, he was not sure whether he ought to observe the same ceremony with Mme. de Valmont, but she put him at his ease with a smiling bow. She was a very handsome woman, tall and fair, and though she had no longer the delicate lines of youth, there was something very attractive in her frank kindly expression. Of course it was the same lady who had walked with her daughter yesterday into the old church at Le Mans. This daughter, now standing behind her, had a much graver look on her noble young face. Her complexion was pale and clear; and there was a simple straightforward dignity about her twenty years which gave every one who saw her the feeling of being in the presence of a high-born maiden of the olden time. The English sailor, waiting in the background at the foot of the steps, looked up at her, and she looked down at him in her quiet way. Then she opened her brown eyes with a sudden surprise, and put her hand on her mother's arm, as she was just turning round to mount the steps with Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'Mon Dieu, maman, c'est lui !'
'What do you say, Cécile ? Where ? Who ?' exclaimed Mme. de Valmont. 'Ah ! c'est bien lui ! Pardon, chère madame ; it was monsieur votre neveu who saved our lives yesterday. Monsieur, how can we show you our gratitude ?'

Everybody turned round, Agnes biting her lips and smiling with irrepressible delight, Marie and her grandmother utterly mystified.

'It was a noble action,' said

M. de Valmont, who was a slight, dark, pleasant-looking man, with very demonstrative manners; and going up first to Johnny, he took him by both hands and squeezed them affectionately.

Johnny was half afraid of being embraced; but M. de Valmont knew better than that. 'Max, Pierre,' he cried, 'where are you ? Shake hands with this noble Englishman, and offer him your thanks for saving the lives of your mother and sister. Thanks are less than nothing. We owe him our whole happiness, all that makes life worth living. Ah, it is a debt that can never be paid.'

Under this shower of gratitude poor Johnny behaved beautifully. He smiled and said nothing, his sunburnt skin taking a still darker tint as he shook hands with the gentlemen. When Mme. de Valmont came and offered him her hand, with very sincere tears in her eyes and all kinds of pretty speeches chasing each other from her quick expressive lips, he just stooped and kissed the soft white fingers, still without saying a word. But when Cécile, with the wonderful life and light in her eyes, that very few even of those who knew her were privileged to see often, held out her slim young hand too, looked at him, and gravely smiled, Johnny pressed the hand in English fashion, and said in a low voice, looking at her,

'Merci, mademoiselle.'

'De grâce, ma chère,' began Mme. de Saint-Hilaire to Mme. de Valmont, as they went into the house, 'explain all these wonders to us. Marie and I are dying with curiosity. Where and when did you make acquaintance with my nephew John, and how had he the good fortune to save your lives ?'

'I was going to tell you the whole story,' said Mme. de Val-

mont, 'and how grieved we were to have lost sight of our deliverer. But is it possible that you do not know it already? Your nephew has not told you of his brave action?'

'Neither my nephew nor my niece has said a word to me on the subject. I hear now for the first time that your life and Cécile's have been in danger,' answered the Comtesse, slightly aggrieved. 'When did this happen?'

'Yesterday, at Le Mans. I have not yet recovered from the shock. Would you not have thought that after such a drive as that the horses would have been quiet? But no! Had it not been for the heroism of your nephew, we should all have been dashed to the bottom of the new cutting.'

'Agnes, my dear child, why did you not tell me?' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'Ma tante, we were not with Johnny at the time. It was after we lost him. I should have told you, but I knew he would not like it to be talked of. And till we were driving along to-day I did not know that Mme. de Valmont was a friend of yours.'

'You are very happy to have such a brother,' said Mme. de Valmont—'as modest as he is brave. Does he follow any profession, this hero of ours?'

'He is in the English navy, madame.'

'And has French blood in his veins,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, as she climbed the stone steps in the hall.

Johnny had another ovation when they had crossed the pretty parqueted hall above, with its low arched roof, and gone on through the library into the great salon with its immense chimney-piece and painted ceiling, its tapestried walls and dark oak furniture. Here they all sat down in a circle of large fauteuils, and listened to

Mme. de Valmont as she thrillingly described her adventure of yesterday. There was much throwing up of hands, and many exclamations; more showers of grateful admiration on the head of the unfortunate hero. Mdlle. Cécile said nothing, like a correct young lady as she was, but sat with a smile in her eyes and a lurking look of fun which sympathised with Johnny's discomfort under this mountain of thanks. Marie de Saint-Hilaire asked a few questions, smiled kindly at Johnny, and made complimentary remarks to Agnes. M. de Valmont, who had been in the French navy in his youth, began asking the young man something about his life on board ship. The two 'jeunes gens' listened and held their peace. After some time spent in this way, M. de Valmont asked Johnny if he would like to see his horses, a proposal which Johnny jumped at; and this ended in all the young people going out with him at the other side of the château, where the drawbridge crossed an old moat thirty feet deep, with trees growing in it.

'Now that they are gone, ma chère, I have something to tell you,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, moving a little nearer to the Marquise.

'Some news about la petite?'

'Yes. The affair with M. de Rochemar is arranged. I cannot tell you,' said the old lady, clasping her hands, 'what a relief this is to me. I have been very anxious about Marie, for, as you know, she has never been quite like other young girls—always difficult to manage, though the most charming child possible.'

Mme. de Valmont nodded and acquiesced, and then listened with great interest to the history of Marie's affairs. In her heart, perhaps, she did not quite regard her

as the most charming child possible, but she was far too good a friend and too polite a woman not to take her quite contentedly at her grandmother's valuation. Any faults that long acquaintance had spied in little Marie were quietly buried in the Marquise's own knowledge. She offered many congratulations, and spoke with the greatest kindness both of the girl and her fiancé.

'The Marquis de Rochemar is so good, so amiable,' she said. 'I only hope that Cécile may be as fortunate as her friend.'

'Have you any plans for her?' asked Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'She has had several offers, you know,' said Mme. de Valmont, shrugging her shoulders and flourishing her fingers in the air. 'Mais je ne sais pas—I tell them all that Cécile is too young; and as you know, one only daughter is different from a dozen. There is no hurry, and her father and I will give her to no one till we are perfectly satisfied. She has a right to expect as good an establishment as any young girl in France. And besides, her education is hardly finished. I cannot part with my Cécile yet. The other day I had a letter from my aunt d'Altain, proposing a gentleman of her acquaintance, Monsieur Jules de Marillac. She says he is a fine young man, and heir to his old uncle, M. le Comte de Marillac. That sounds well, and I think it is just possible that if I see him in Paris, and if I like him, I may permit him and Cécile to have an entrevue. But I am not at all sure. Now that we are alone, I seriously must congratulate you on your charming nephew, to whom we owe so much. I admire mademoiselle your niece too; elle a l'air très-distingué. But as to him—such fearless courage, such presence of mind, such devotion!

You are happy in having such a relation, dear madame.'

'I am extremely glad that John behaved so well,' said the Comtesse; 'in fact, I am astonished. If it had been his brother I should have felt no surprise whatever. Frank is the flower of the family; and so you will confess when I have the pleasure of presenting him to you.'

'Is it possible?'

'It is so, I assure you. As handsome as an angel; clever, accomplished, with manners that might have been learnt at court. I am proud of him as my relation indeed.'

'And why did you not bring him with you?'

'He has long been suffering from a severe illness, and was tired after his journey. The next time we meet I hope he will be quite himself.'

'You and all your young people must dine with us very soon,' said Mme. de Valmont.

While these ladies were talking them over in the salon, the young people were following M. de Valmont all about the place. His stables were well worth seeing, to begin with. He had beautiful English horses, and they lived in stalls with brass headings and pink-marble mangers. The saddle-room, where the harness and the whips were so various and in such perfect order as to be quite an exhibition, had a polished floor, with little green mats laid upon it here and there. The young De Valmonts were very anxious to know whether such arrangements as these were commonly seen in England; and Agnes and Johnny assured them that such perfection was very seldom reached, or even tried for.

'Mon père est grand amateur de chevaux,' said Max de Valmont, a good-natured good-looking young man of two-and-twenty.

They went next to see some

deer-hounds, which had a house in the outbuildings; and then wandered round the courtyards of the old château. The present house was, perhaps, not much older than François I.; but there had been a strong castle here for hundreds of years before that. Six round towers defended the old enclosure, inside which there were now three or four large yards and a good-sized kitchen-garden. There were ivy and climbing roses on the battered old walls, and great walnut-trees leaning over them. Agnes was very much interested, and pleased M. de Valmont by asking all kinds of intelligent questions about the fortifications and the history of the château. Cécile talked to Marie, and helped her over the heaps of stones and the uneven places which were in their way now and then. The young men and Johnny lingered a little behind, but had not very much to say to each other; however, there were two fox-terriers to be played with, which came racing after them.

'Now follow me,' said M. de Valmont, as they crossed the kitchen-garden, 'and I will show you one of the causes of the Revolution. Take care, mademoiselle, the descent is very steep.'

They all followed one another down something which had once been a staircase, and now was a chaos of stones, and tumbling earth, and dead leaves, with long grass and weeds hanging over it. At the foot of this they mounted a broken step into a little doorway, and stood inside a round tower very oddly constructed. There were openings at the top, under the penthouse roof, and to the height of at least five-and-twenty feet there were tiers on tiers of pigeon-holes in the old white wall—thousands of them. In the middle of the tower there

was a great upright beam, with arms stretched out, to which were fastened two ladders. The arms turned round, and by their means the ladders could move from nest to nest.

'This is a funny place!' said Johnny.

'C'est le colombier,' said Cécile de Valmont, turning to him with a smile. 'One of the old rights of the noblesse. My father keeps it as a curiosity.'

The Marquis, in the foreground, was explaining to Agnes that before the Revolution the nobles alone had the right to keep pigeons, which lived in this tower, and flew out all over the country for their food, taking the best grain of the peasants, who had no business to complain if all the food belonging to them and their children went for the use of the seigneur.

'How wicked that was!' said Agnes earnestly.

'Oui, mademoiselle,' said M. de Valmont, smiling. 'That and other wickednesses were swept away so roughly that one almost forgets still to be indignant. My grandfather and grandmother, and many other of our relations, paid dearly for their colombier with their heads.'

'Ah,' said Agnes, shivering a little, 'I think I never realised the Revolution before.'

They climbed silently back out of the old tower, and were soon laughing in the garden sunshine, but Agnes's thoughts still lingered in the darkness of the Revolution. In more ways than one she could understand it now. In Mme. de Valmont, with her sweet easy manners; in Cécile, with her grave nobleness brightened by girlish fun, and the straight fearless look of her brown eyes; even in Marie de Saint-Hilaire, with her small frame and delicate features, and

air at once spirited, careless, gentle, and a little sad, she seemed to see the ladies who had kept up their traditions in all the terror of the prison, who had smiled and laughed sweetly, and prayed earnestly, who had not dreamed such a thing as cowardice possible, and

had gone on to their terrible death as if it was indeed the gate at the end of the 'thorny path that leads to glory.' Agnes was quite right: the times are not so changed but that it still means a good deal to have noble French blood in one's veins.

(*To be continued.*)

AN OLD FOGGY ON CHRISTMAS.

'Tis Christmas; but changed are the fashions
 Since I first heard its clamorous bells:
 For the girls of the period have passions,
 And the boys of the period are swells;
 Yet a charm on one's memory dwells.
 Long ago there were terrible spectres,
 And marvellous riddles to guess,
 In days ere the railway directors
 Put on the express.

'Neath mistletoe, loved by the Druid,
 You might then snatch a frolicsome kiss;
 And the punch of that time was a fluid
 That nobody voted amiss;
 And the snap-dragon—didn't it hiss?
 Every girl in your heart was a lodger
 Who met you with mischievous glance;
 And, O, what a romp was Sir Roger
 De Coverley's dance!

Mid beauties so buxom and lissom
 One forgot that the winter was cold;
 But why does it seem that I miss 'em?
 Perchance I'm a foggy grown old,
 Whose life is a tale that is told.
 When a man is approaching to fifty
 He seldom breaks into his nights,
 And is apt to be studiously thrifty
 Of violent delights.

But wherefore one's age be revealing?
 Leave that to the Registry books.
 A man is as old as he's feeling;
 A woman as old as she looks.
 Don't eagles live longer than rooks?
 Besides, in this festival season
 'Tis fit that great truths should be told:
 'Whom the gods love, die young'—for this reason
 They cannot grow old.

MORTIMER COLLINS.

DRAWING-ROOM AMUSEMENTS.

If ever there was a country which stood in need of indoor amusements, that country is undoubtedly our own, whose climate—to put it in the prettiest way possible—is at best unreliable, and in which consequently the amusements most in favour in sunnier climes can have no sufficient place. What can be more delightful than Longfellow's Arcadian picture?—

'Pleasant it was, when the woods were
green
And the winds were soft and low,
To sit amid some silvan scene,
Where, the long drooping boughs be-
tween,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
Alternate come and go.'

But unfortunately the times when all these charming circumstances combine to make life pleasant in England are few and so far between. The barometer and the thermometer have an ugly knack in this island of ours of dropping unconscionably and unexpectedly as soon as ever any scheme has been adopted which is dependent on the weather; and although some adventurous spirits do undertake those ghastly exposures of the skeleton of society called picnics, their immediate result is generally failure, and their final consequences gruel and mustard-and-water. But if the outdoor life of England is wanting in the elements of enjoyment of the gentler sort, the charms of its indoor life more than make up for it. In this at least we stand unrivalled. What can approach the comfort, the cosiness, and the inexpressible sense of home-affection which steals over all when, with the family circle complete, the curtains are

closed, the lamps lit, and the fire is blazing clear and bright, giving notice of the hard frost prevalent outside?

Yet for winter evenings something more is required than reading and conversation. Conversation, which, when properly understood, is the best of all ways for passing time, demands qualities which are but too rare, and which, even if they exist in the highest degree, find but little scope for their display in intimate circles of which the members know each other too well to have many points of novelty to exchange such as conversation requires. The most popular and sufficient means of spending the evening hours pleasantly has ever been found in amusements harmless and perhaps trivial in themselves, but demanding from those who join in them precisely that good-nature, forbearance, and familiarity which form the charm of intimate circles, and offering at the same time sufficient elements of interest to be attractive to such as are willing to show a readiness to be amused. The following pages will have performed a task by no means useless if they furnish the means of passing pleasantly some few evening hours, and of thus indirectly strengthening the power of home ties and home affections. In the first part will be found the more ambitious kind of amusements, such as demand a certain amount of preparation or a considerable share of special aptitude; while the second part embraces such as require no preparation at all, and are fitted for the use of all

circles in which a moderate degree of intimacy prevails.

The simplest games have been chosen in preference to those of a too complicated nature, and many will be found here which have for the first time, it is believed, been drawn from the private stores of country-houses in England and from some of the châteaux in France. It is necessary to say that in all amusements of this sort everything depends on the spirit in which they are undertaken; and thus it will often happen that a game or an entertainment depending on mutual coöperation which to one party will appear intensely amusing will to another seem unutterably stupid; whence the general rule may be derived that it is worse than useless to attempt anything of the sort unless those who take part in it are fairly in accord with and sympathetic to each other, and at peace with themselves and the world in general.

PART I.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

THEATRICAL representations no doubt take the very first place among drawing-room amusements, and the great and increasing popularity which they enjoy is a proof how much they are appreciated as a means of filling up hours which else would be passed more idly and not more profitably. There is indeed scarcely a country-house in the kingdom which has not been the scene of an attempt at this kind of thing; and as it is an invariable rule for amateur theatricals to be a brilliant success, they are still on the increase both among those who have already tried them, and among those who desire to begin. Nevertheless it has been sometimes found

that, through the neglect of certain precautions, the play has proved a source of greater pleasure to the actors than to the spectators; and it will therefore be useful to give a little wholesome advice, derived from actual experience, to those who would undertake theatricals with a desire to do justice to themselves and to their friends. The first necessity is to appoint a good manager, and to invest him with the most despotic authority over the rest of the *corps dramatique*, and, indeed, over the resources of the house generally. He should be empowered to choose the piece, to settle the 'cast,' or, in other words, to decide who shall act each character, to arrange the stage business, and to superintend the erection of the stage itself and the choice of the dresses; and his decision should be final and entirely without appeal on all matters connected with the business in hand. In return for all his trouble he will probably (for such is human nature) expect to play the best part in the piece; but if he is the best manager he will in all likelihood be also the best actor of the party, and there will therefore be no question as to that part of the matter. In order to secure for all these important duties a proper person, it may perhaps be necessary to invite to the house the most supremely disagreeable person with whom the hostess is acquainted; but that is an incident, and will not, of course, be allowed to weigh against the success of the theatricals, which will be found to depend entirely upon the tact and capacity of the guiding spirit. It is not to be supposed either that the manager will lie on a bed of roses. The first thing will be to select the piece or pieces—a question which will necessarily be decided by the strength and capabilities

of the company. In this probably everybody will claim a voice ; and it will be no easy task to reconcile the claims of the thousand conflicting propositions which will be made. Tragedies of course will be avoided, because as professional actors cannot play them, it is hardly to be expected that amateurs can. Farces, although in much favour, require generally very excellent acting, must 'go smoothly' if they are to produce their effect, and are seldom so successful as they are expected to be. They have, too, the disadvantage of having usually been seen by most of the audience with good professional actors playing in them, and comparisons are consequently apt to be made which will not be to the credit of the amateurs. Probably the best kind of play is a short comedietta of a period which affords the opportunity of wearing gorgeous dresses, since the presentation of a good figure in maroon-coloured velvet and buff boots, or a pretty face under a Marie Stuart cap, will often prevent attention from being too critically fixed upon the acting. Then will come the casting of the parts; and here the difficulties will be found to increase, for it will then be discovered that some who have hitherto been ardent in the scheme are either too timid or too indolent to undertake the parts the manager would give to them, while others will be found to raise claims for which it is impossible to discover the slightest foundation; and the manager will probably find that he must give the lovely and gushing heroine over to a middle-aged young lady who likes the idea of being proposed to on the stage because she has never experienced it in real life ; that the hero is pretty distinctly claimed as a condition of coöperation by a young man, more distinguished by family

than by talent, but whom it is an object to oblige ; that he himself must play the heavy father, who has to be brutal and a butt all through the piece, and is only reduced to reason at the fall of the curtain by a concourse of fortuitous circumstances ; and that there are two servants, or two noblemen, or two robbers, who never can be played at all for want of people to take them, unless he can induce two good-natured friends to come down and sacrifice themselves for the occasion. But we will suppose all this over, and will assume that the piece is selected, and the parts cast. The point the manager must then insist upon is that every one of the actors shall learn his or her part so as to be 'word-perfect' two or three days at least before the piece is played, and, if possible, before the first rehearsal takes place. This is the most essential part of the whole thing, for it were as useless to attempt to make bricks without straw, or to build a house without bricks, as to play a piece without a perfect knowledge of the words. No half-knowledge will do, and none of those fallacious promises to 'know it on the night' must be received ; but every one must be perfect, and that at as early a period of the undertaking as possible, for without it the stage business cannot be properly arranged or the actors adequately drilled. It is very important, too, to have as large a number of rehearsals as possible, as upon this will depend the degree in which both words and business are fixed upon the minds of the actors. Two or even three rehearsals a week should be called, if, as is usually the case, the time for preparation is limited. During the time that all this is being done the dresses will have to be chosen and tried on (assuming them to be hired of a costumer, which is the best way), the stage contrived and

arranged, and the programmes printed or written out. A stage sufficient for ordinary purposes may be formed by using the folding doors of a drawing-room as a proscenium, or it can be arranged at a very small expense by simply placing two upright pieces of timber against the side walls of the room with a slight beam across resting upon them. On this latter must be tacked the curtain, which can be made to loop up from each side, or to draw up from the bottom by four or five cords running through rings. In front of the curtain on the floor, must be placed the footlights, which can be made by simply boring a sufficient number of round holes (in which the candles are put) in a strip of deal, to the outer edge of which a piece of tin must be nailed to serve as a reflector and to keep the light from the eyes of the audience. In front of the footlights, inside the curtain, a wire should be stretched some eighteen inches from the ground to guard against the possibility of the ladies' dresses taking fire. If scenery is required it can be hired with the dresses, or may be painted at a small cost on canvas stretched on wooden frames. Not the least important part of the proceedings is the choice of a prompter, who should have a thorough knowledge of the piece, and should be instructed not to keep his eyes fixed solely on his book, but to watch chiefly the actors, that he may know when to give the word wanted, and may not proffer it as an unpractised hand invariably does, to the ruin of all the good 'points,' at every interval of silence, many of which will be intentionally left for effect. When all this is done, and 'the night' arrives, the acting becomes the principal consideration; and here a few recommendations may be useful. The actors should, above all, re-

member not to hurry themselves either in their words or their gestures, so that they will be heard by all the audience. In order to effect this it is not necessary to shout, or even to speak very loud. The principal thing to be remembered is to pronounce each word distinctly, articulating every syllable. Care in making up is very necessary too; and while for ordinary characters a black line under the lower eyelash and a little rouge gently shaded off from the cheek-bones to the ears will be sufficient, the old men must be 'lined' with pale Indian ink or brown paint over the wrinkles made on the forehead and at the corners of the eyes by screwing the face up into various positions, while the comic characters must be treated, according to circumstances, with appropriate wigs and a liberal use of colours. The paints used should be vegetable colours, these being less injurious to the skin than those made of minerals. A little cold cream will be found useful in removing the paint from the faces of those who possess an over-irritable skin. Beyond this it is useless to say anything, for no amount of advice will make actors of those who may not happen to possess the talent for the dramatic art. If, however, a fair amount of such be present, the play will not fail to be a success, so far, at any rate, as those interested in it will be able to ascertain; and even if the audience should flag a little, the actors will have already derived sufficient amusement from the rehearsals amply to repay them for the trouble they have taken; while the remembrance of it will add a peculiar zest to the pleasure which they will hereafter derive from meeting each other.

CHARADES.

Charades are of a less ambi-

tious character and consequently more easy of execution than theatricals proper, and the great charm of them is that they can be, as they should be, devised, executed, and forgotten in half an hour. The first step is a little private consultation among the actors. A word of two or more syllables must be chosen capable of being broken up into shorter words, such, for instance, as 'Inspector;' and a separate plot must be devised to represent each of the words of which it is composed, as well as the whole word itself. As the dialogue should be impromptu it is necessary that the characters should be very strongly marked. The dresses and wigs can be contrived out of anything that can be laid hold of at the moment, to which end it is necessary that all the available stores of the house should be placed at the disposition of the actors. The usual rule is to make the plots distinct from each other; but it will be found to add materially to the interest of the charade if they are connected with each other, so as to form as it were only separate acts of the same play. Thus the word 'Inspector' is divisible into 'Inn,' and 'Spectre,' the first of which may be adequately illustrated in this way: A lady and her daughter arrive at the Golden Lion, an hotel in the country. The mother is an extravagantly sentimental character and a poetess, and has torn her daughter, who is quietly practical, away from the London season, partly in order to nip in the bud an affection she has displayed for a young banker, and partly in order to 'commune with Nature.' Of course the young banker arrives in disguise (either an artist, a shipwrecked mariner, or a noble beggar defrauded of his paternal

estates will do), and he takes rooms in the inn, and arranges with the daughter a plan of operations with the object of bringing matters to a successful matrimony. A landlord can here be introduced, whose chief feature will be rotundity of form and indignation at his hotel being called an inn, as well as a 'boots,' inindful of tips and curious after stray silver in the pockets of the coats he has to brush. The second word can be illustrated by the interior of the Golden Lion at midnight, the mother being discovered reading 'The Raven,' with interlineations and criticisms of her own, with the daughter yawning by her side. The latter asks to be told of the Castle of Otranto and its apparitions, a desire which the mother is only too delighted to indulge, and is in the act of describing the bleeding nun when the clock strikes twelve; a clanking of chains is heard, and the banker appears clad in a sheet to represent a spectre, whom the mother interrogates, and learns that she must cross her daughter's will no more. She cannot agree to this, however, quite readily, so the ghost tells her of a manuscript hidden in an old chest in the garret. She rushes out to find it, when the banker throws off his disguise and proceeds incontinently to elope with his lady-love.

The third act will represent 'Inspector.' The mother will be found reading a bundle of hotel-bills, which she supposes must be the manuscript in question, and occasionally bewailing the absence of her daughter, when the host announces that news has been received of her. The banker again comes in, this time disguised as an inspector of police; tells a long tale of his having rescued the daughter from the

power of fourteen banditti (the real fact being, as he tells the audience aside, that he could not find a post-chaise to elope with), and finally brings her in, and has her hand given to him as a reward for his valour. The moral of course is that mammas should not be too romantic nor daughters too matter-of-fact, and any disposition to doubt that such a conclusion can be fairly deduced from the plot must be promptly suppressed. Any number of charades can be contrived in this sort of way, but it is essential that in this kind of performance the actors should take care not to speak all at once, and when they do speak not to go on too long at a time. There is not so much difficulty in finding words as in finding ideas with which to illustrate them; but here are a few which may be useful if none occur: Mantelpiece (mantle-peace), Brandy (Brand-eye), Portrait (Port-rate), Madrigal (Mad-rye-gal), Horticulture (Haughty-culture), Buskin (Bus-kin), Patriot (Pat-riot), Penelope (Pen-elope).

In addition to those already described, dumb charades may be played; but since, as their name indicates, the actors are restricted to pantomime for the expression of the word or syllable, the difficulty of the matter is much increased. Dumb charades, indeed, should only be undertaken by those who have remarkable facial power and a knowledge of expressive gesture which it is difficult to acquire in English life. If well done, however, they are extremely amusing; but the words chosen must be capable of full and easy pantomimic representation. 'Outrage,' for instance, may be illustrated by the difficulties of a gentleman afflicted with bills. The first syllable may be expressed by the different attempts made to

find him at home by different creditors, each one of whom, on failing to find the debtor, indicates his determination to pursue a different course, such as shooting him, summoning him to the county-court, appealing to the Lord Chancellor, writing to his father, or taking up a position on the doorstep till he returns home. The second syllable may portray the rage of the papa, who, having arrived in town and succeeded after much difficulty in obtaining admittance to his son's rooms, finds them full, not as he expected of legal books and many briefs, but of piles of unpaid bills and a number of dogs, foils, and boxing-gloves. He expresses his determination to cut his son off with a shilling, and on the arrival of the young man with a cigar does so with much energy and determination. The whole word will then be illustrated by the admission of the creditors, who have all called again in a body, and who, finding nobody but the old gentleman in the room, insist on believing that it is the young man himself in disguise, and proceed to carry into effect upon him all their threats. After he has been shot at, stripped of his coat, made to read a threatening letter addressed to himself, committed by the Lord Chancellor for contempt of court, and otherwise maltreated, the son appears with a brief, and on expressing contrition and throwing his dogs, boxing-gloves, and cigars out of the window, is forgiven and the debts paid, to the satisfaction of everybody and the full elucidation of the word.

The names of 'Historical,' 'Poetical,' or 'Shakespearian' are sometimes given to charades, but as they merely indicate the nature of the word to be illustrated, they need no further explanation.

For those who wish to play French charades here are some words. Fougneux (Fou-gneux), Détresse (Dé-tresse), Corteau (Cor-teau), Cordon (Cor-don), Lamentable (L'amant-table).

PROVERBS.

These are of the same nature as charades, except that instead of a word a proverb is represented, and the plot must consequently be calculated to show the truth of the saw chosen. It is usually, however, necessary to tell the proverb at the end, and for this, as well as for other reasons, they are not so amusing as charades. The construction of a plot to illustrate a moral is necessarily more difficult than the construction of one to illustrate a word. Nevertheless, if carefully arranged they are capable of being made interesting. Here are some: 'Don't halloo before you're out of the wood;' 'Necessity is the mother of invention;' 'Handsome is as handsome does;' 'Faint heart never won fair lady;' 'More haste, less speed;' 'Love me little, love me long;' 'The pitcher goes often to the well, and is broken at last;' &c.

Perverved proverbs may also be played, the object of the play being, as the name indicates, to justify a total departure from the saws usually received. Thus, 'Punctuality gathers no moss,' 'A rolling stone is the soul of business,' 'A burnt cat is the thief of time,' 'Smooth words dread the fire,' and 'It's an ill wind that butters no parsneps,' are all capable of being justified by an equal amount of ingenuity with that which is required to illustrate the original proverbs. As no intelligible plan of life or code of morality is capable of being derived from the old sayings, which have generally little beyond their epigrammatic character to recommend

them, Sancho Panza himself could not object to the attempt to improve them by running them one into the other, and the wisdom and virtue of the world will certainly not suffer any loss from it.

TABLEAUX VIVANTS.

These are perhaps the very best of the more ambitious drawing-room amusements, since they combine the largest amount of preparation with the least amount of actual exertion and smallest tax upon capacity for their representation. To be able to look well and to stand still are the only qualities required, and there is consequently less fear of breaking down, and therefore less anxiety connected with them, than in those amusements already noticed. To make up for it, however, they require, if anything, better management than either theatricals or charades. Everything, in fact, depends upon the manager's capacity. It is indispensable that he should be thoroughly acquainted with the requirements of the case. He must, above all, have an artistic eye, for in tableaux the rule is, 'Always judge by appearances,' and he should be invested with as much authority as in the case of theatricals. The course of proceeding is first to choose the subject of the tableau, and this will be found no easy matter, for the manager will discover that most of those who have not sufficient confidence to act have more than sufficient confidence to stand and be looked at in tableaux; and it will be found that the ladies are particularly desirous to appear in quaint and magnificent dresses. The effect of this is that he will have to range through history and ransack his memory of foreign galleries and exhibitions of painting for subjects in which the fair and the unfair sex are present respec-

tively in the proportion of about seven to one. He will grow desperate over the private history of the great Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots, and will be generous indeed if he does not invent some new scandal as to the latter. He will vacillate between the Four Seasons, Cleopatra, and Faith, Hope, and Charity; and if, when he has finally been reduced to the murder of Rizzio, Joan of Arc, and Sir Walter Raleigh's cloak, he should be told that they have been 'done before,' he must be in a position to assert with some show of truth that at least they were never so well done as he means to do them. Having then settled the subject, the dresses and wigs must be provided (and here again the professional costumer must probably be invoked), and the stage arranged—a very important matter. It is most desirable that for tableaux the stage should be raised, and at some distance from the spectators—two conditions which add greatly to the effect of the pictures. Blue or white gauze should be stretched over the whole of the proscenium before the curtain, and the background formed of green baize, or, if dark colours preponderate in the dresses, of warm gray drapery. The lights, too, are very important. They must be fitted with reflectors (carriage-lamps are useful for this reason), and be disposed according to the sort of light required at the sides of the stage, facing of course inwards. The lights among the audience should at the moment of showing the tableaux be either quite extinguished or turned down as low as possible. Like all other such things the tableaux must be rehearsed. It is of course necessary too that at the rehearsals all the costumes should be worn, since, as the excellence of the tableaux depends not less

upon the grouping than upon the arrangement of the colours, a rehearsal without dress would be no rehearsal at all. This necessity for dressing, however, adds to the fun of the thing, and the charm of coming down to breakfast on a cold winter's morning in the costume of Sir Walter Raleigh (which consists principally of pink-silk tights) will be appreciated by those who, like myself, have experienced it. The actors will be found to look somewhat ghastly by the pitiless daylight, and even Amy Robsart and Mary Queen of Scots will probably, if it be possible, improve on appearing on the stage, which must be shut off from the daylight and lit up as it will be at night. Then begins the important work of the manager. He must of course be able thoroughly to realise the 'situation' represented in the picture chosen, and to give to each person in it an exact idea of the passion or sentiment to be portrayed. Unless, indeed, a manager can be found capable of doing this it is useless to attempt tableaux. He will impress upon each of the actors the necessity of throwing his or herself into the thing thoroughly, and of actually feeling for the moment that which it is intended to depict. Unless this is remembered Rizzio may be found blandly simpering with the dagger at his throat, while Darnley's guilty conscience may be overcome by mirth at the sight of Ruthven being tickled by a rebellious feather of one of the maids of honour. It will be best to show a tableau twice, or if it will bear it three times, as the difficulty of remaining in the same position without unsteadiness is too great to allow of each exhibition being sufficiently prolonged to satisfy an average audience of friends. Soft music appropriate to

the scene represented should be played immediately before and during the display of each tableau, which will be found to add materially to the effect. For choice of subjects a reference to a portfolio of engravings, or an appeal to the picture-gallery reminiscences of the company at large, must be relied upon. 'Judith with the head of Holofernes' is good, the head being represented by that of one of the gentlemen, whitened, dashed with blood, and with the eyes closed, which he will put through a hole made in the salver for the purpose, his body being concealed by drapery. 'The Maid of Saragossa' is effective too, especially if a field-piece can be borrowed from any neighbouring garrison. Millais' picture of 'The Huguenot,' the 'Poisoning of Fair Rosamonde' (Percy Reliques); a scene from the 'Rape of the Lock,' taken at the moment when the fatal curl is falling a victim to the scissors; the trial of Constance de Beverley at the Convent of Lindisfarn (vide 'Marmion'), are all effective, the latter especially so if a lady can be found willing to follow the verse which tells us that

'Her sex a page's dress belied ;'

a condition which will be compensated by the opportunity for display afforded when, as we learn,

'A monk undid the silken band
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread
In ringlets rich and rare.'

BOUITS RIMÉS.

This amusement requires a considerable amount of ability to be well done, and if it is not well done had best be left alone, so that the seeker for pastimes must be sure of his company before he introduces it. The name sufficiently indicates the nature of the

task to be performed. One of the party chooses two, three, or four pairs of words which rhyme to each other—such, for instance, as mile and tile, strand and land, love and dove, friend and end—and gives them to each of the rest to make a verse. The fun of the thing consists in the different modes of treatment which are employed by each person. Take the above words, for instance, arranged alternately; here is a specimen of what may be done with them impromptu :

'For many a weary, waking, toilsome
mile,
I wander wretched by the sea-girt
strand;
For Celia, cruel as she's versatile,
Sends me to rove unheeded through
the land,
Love's but my scorn, but ever scorns my
love,
And vows she can but bear me as a
friend;
Thus, like a poor unhappy turtle-dove,
I coo myself to death, and there's an
end.'

Another version :

'How doth the little camomile
Grow upward in the strand,
And spread its roots from tile to tile,
O'ershadowing the land!
Poor Sarah Gamp, when sick with love,
Hails it her dearest friend;
For like to Bet—that simple dove—
Tea is its proper end.'

Here, again, is a different treatment:

'Dragging for a mile
On the burning strand,
Destitute of tile
In a roasting land,
The crocodile in love
Woos his scaly friend,
And, unlike the dove,
Eats her to an end.'

The above specimens may be considered feeble. So they are, and so will be most of those which are brought forth under this system. The greater the absurdity the greater the success, and that is the only criterion with which I am acquainted. It will be seen that this amusement tends to encourage mediocrity into making an effort.

TWELFTH-NIGHT AND SNAP-DRAGON.

A TWELFTH-NIGHT Party! And have met a joyous youthful crew,
Sweet opening buds as ever yet from parent-flower grew;
And merry prate and laughter shrill with music fill the air,
For Grace and Youth and Innocence and honest Mirth are there.

Ha, Snap-dragon! Turn down the lights! Papa, come forth, and be
The wizard weird to fire the flame of fearful mystery—
The pale-blue flame that flickers up, and on our faces gleams,
Mid smother'd laughter from the boys, from girls pretended screams.

With shouts of mirth and merriment the game goes gaily on,
And crows and chuckles baby Tom—the rogue!—high-perch'd upon
His granddad's shoulder, whilst the flame leaps blue and weird and
bright,
And peals of laughter greet the feats of each adventurous wight.

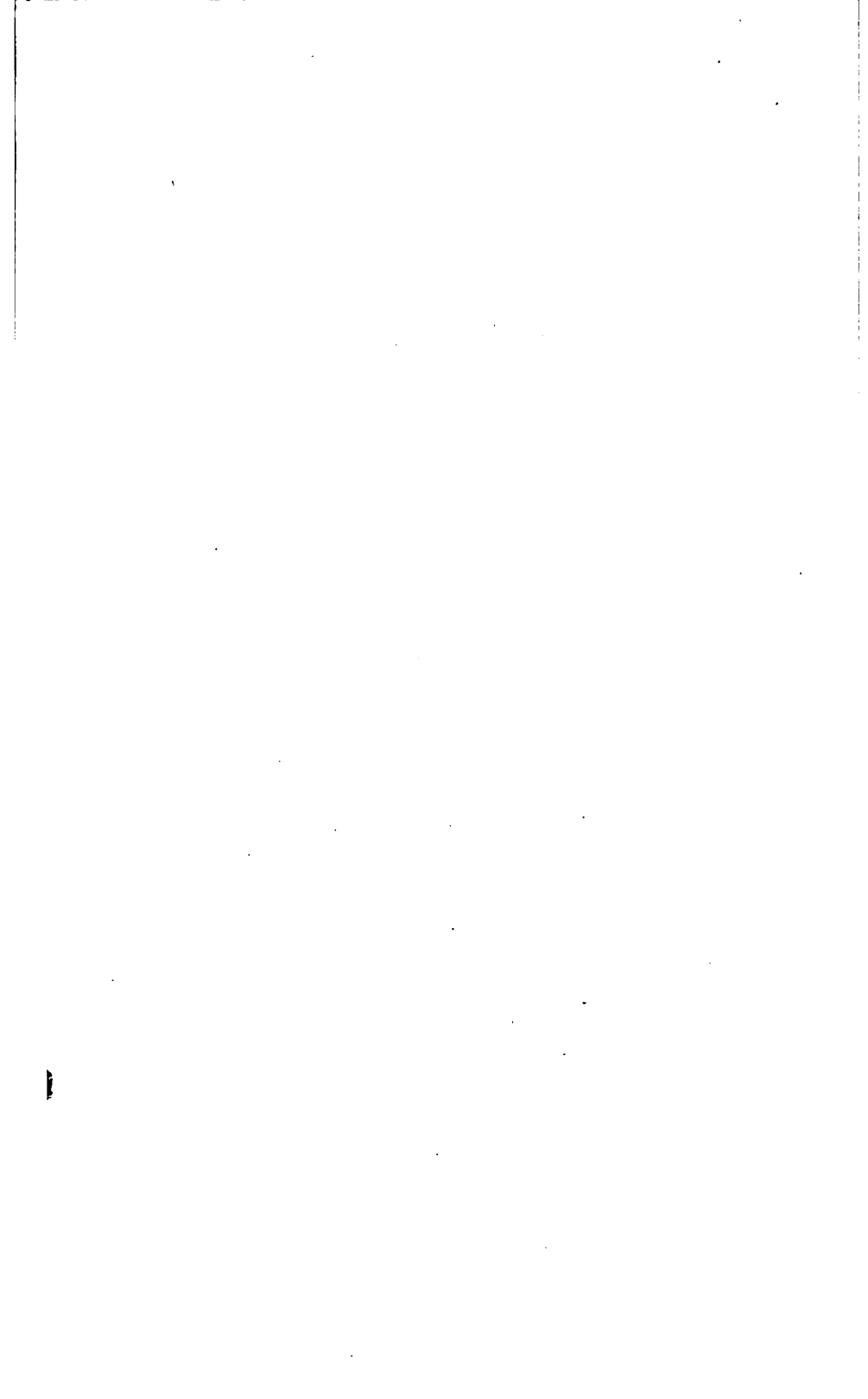
And lovingly behind the group the smiling elders stand,
And note each sparkling mirthful eye, each outstretch'd eager hand;
The boy's quick dash—for it becomes his 'manhood' to be bold—
The shy girl's timid venturing, are charming to behold.

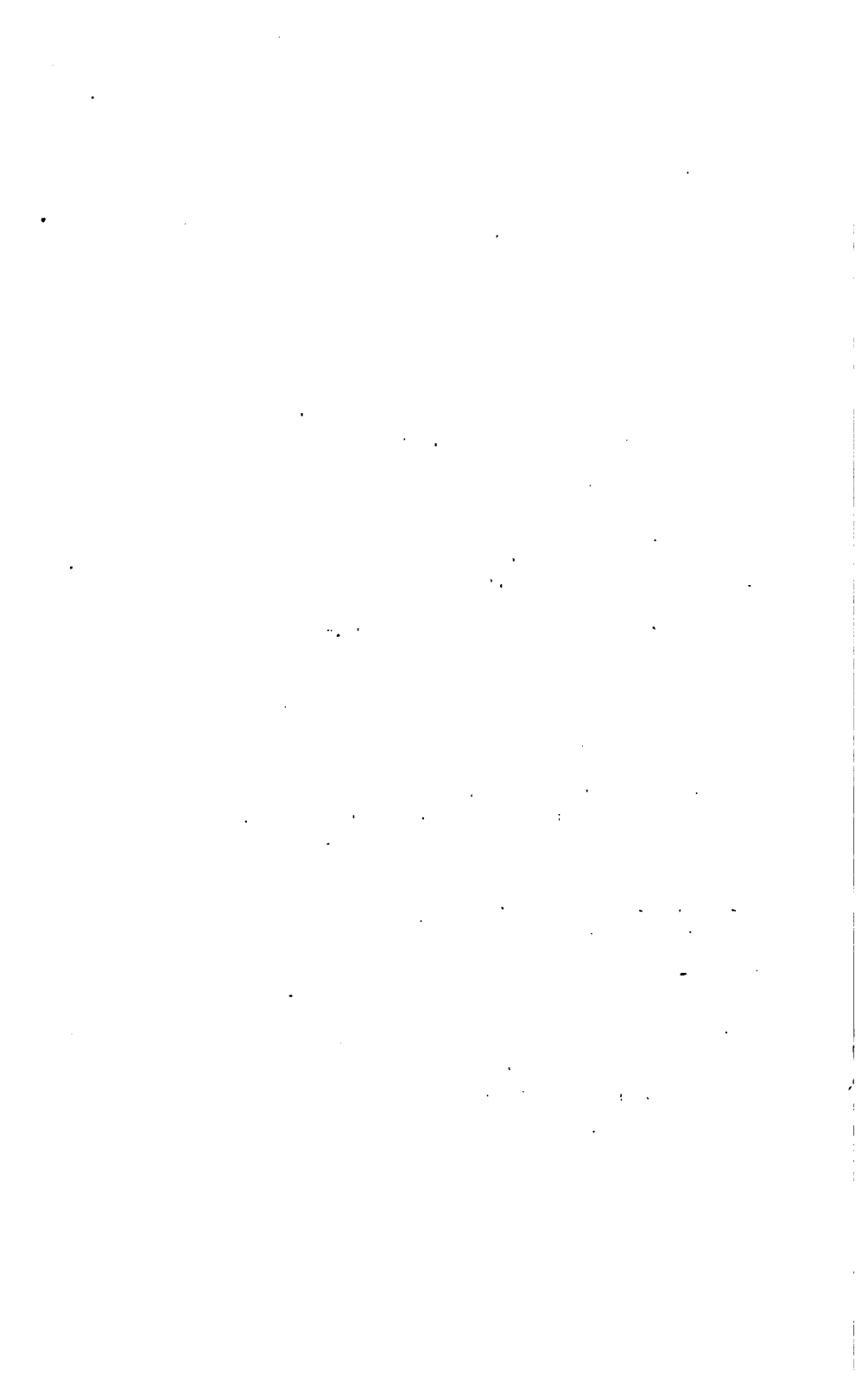
Till, tired of laughing, from the game the youngsters one by one
Fall out. And now mamma suggests—to keep alive the fun—
'The Characters!' Ah, happy thought! All-joyous now the scene;
For what to youth would Twelfth-night be without a King and Queen?

With glee the 'Characters' are drawn; the younglings shout and sing;
And arch coquets the baby Queen with her small schoolboy King;
Foreshadowing of later years, when she, expectant wife,
Shall draw (as grant she may!) a prize from out the wheel of life.

God bless our English mother-flowers, their blossoms young and fair—
Our darlings with the sunny eyes and flowing golden hair!
And God be thank'd such tender joys of home to man are given,
As lighten all his hours of toil, and make of earth a heaven!

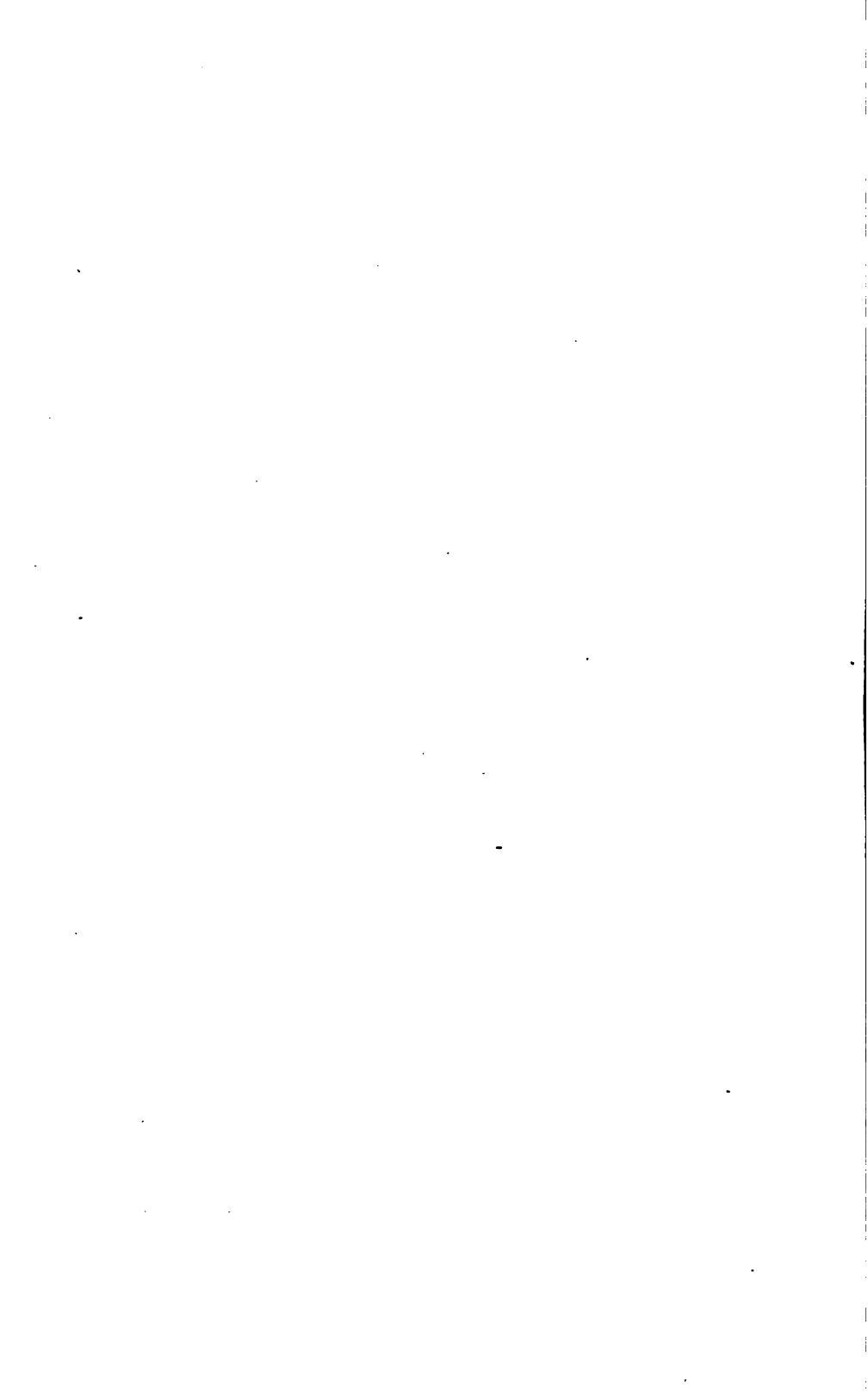
ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.







TWELFTH-NIGHT AND SNAPDRAGON,



THE LADY-DOCTOR.

Saw ye that spinster tall and gray,
Whose aspect stern might well dismay
 A grenadier stout-hearted?
The golden hair, the blooming face,
And all a maiden's tender grace
 Long, long from her have parted.

A doctor she; her sole delight
To order draughts as black as night—
 Powders and pills and lotions:
Her very glance might cast a spell,
Transmuting sherry and moselle
 To less inviting potions.

Yet if some rash presumptuous man
Her early life should dare to scan,
 Strange things he might discover
For in the bloom of sweet seventeen
She wander'd through the meadows green
 To meet a youthful lover.

She did not give him Jesuits' bark
To brighten up his vital spark,
 Nor ipecacuanha,
Nor chlorodyne, nor camomile,
But blushing looks, and many a smile,
 And kisses sweet as manna.

But, ah, the maiden's heart grew cold;
Perhaps she thought the youth too bold;
 Perhaps his views had shock'd her:
In anger, scorn, caprice, or pride
She left her ardent wooer's side
 To be a lady-doctor.

She threw away the faded flowers,
Gather'd amid the woodland bowers,
 Her lover's parting token.
If suffering limbs we can relieve,
What need for aching souls to grieve?
 Why mourn, though hearts be broken?

She cared not though, with frequent moan,
He wander'd through the woods alone,
 Dreaming of past affection;
She valued at the lowest price
Men neither *patients* for advice
 Nor *subjects* for dissection.

The Lady-Doctor.

She studied hard for her degree ;
 At length the coveted M.D.
 Was to her name appended.
 Joy to that doctor young and fair,
 With rosy cheeks and golden hair,
 Learning with beauty blended !

Diseases man can scarce endure
 A lady's glance may quickly cure,
 E'en though the pain be chronic ;
 Where'er that maiden bright was seen
 Her eye surpass'd the best quinine,
 Her smile became a tonic.

But soon, too soon, the hand of care
 Sprinkled with snow her golden hair,
 Her face grew worn and jaded ;
 Forgotten was each maiden wile ;
 She scarce remember'd how to smile ;
 Her roses all were faded.

And now she looks so grim and stern,
 We wonder any heart could burn
 For one so uninviting ;
 No gentle sympathy she shows ;
 She seems a man in woman's clothes,
 All female graces slighting.

Yet blame her not, for she has known
 The woe of living all alone,
 In friendless dreary sadness ;
 She longs for what she once disdain'd,
 And sighs to think she might have gain'd
 A home of love and gladness.

MORAL.

Fair maid, if thine unfetter'd heart
 Yearn for some busy toilsome part,
 Let that engross thee only ;
 But, O, if bound by love's light chain,
 Leave not thy true and faithful swain
 Disconsolate and lonely.

C. N.

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

ENGLISH AMBASSADORS AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

THE departure of Lord Salisbury as Ambassador Extraordinary for Constantinople has set one musing on the subject of English embassies to the Porte, and gathering up one's *souvenirs*. It was only by the Treaty of Paris, some score of years ago, that Turkey entered into the European family party; but of course for centuries there have been ambassadors to discharge ambassadorial business. The Turks, however, for a long time had a peculiar way of dealing with ambassadors that made European Courts rather shy of diplomatic missions. The Sublime Porte, they said, was open to all the world. Any ambassador might go there; but they did not say anything about the ambassador coming away again. Accordingly, in the grand old Ottoman days, it was not impossible that in the case of war an ambassador might be shut up in prison, or have his head cut off, or be skinned alive, which naturally made people shy of becoming ambassadors. As it was openly laid down by the Turkish Ulema that no faith was to be kept with unbelievers, those unbelievers had fair warning of what they were to expect. The Turks resolved all mankind into two nations: the faithful formed one, and the dogs of infidels formed the other. The simple foreign politics of the Ottoman Porte were summed up in offering its neighbours the choice of the sword, the Koran, or the tribute. Other things being equal, however, the

Turks thought that the simple effective methods of the axe, the yataghan, or the bowstring were preferable in dealing with dogs of Christians. The advice tendered by one Grand Vizier to the Divan was, that all ambassadors should be confined to a small island near Constantinople, as lepers or other infectious and unclean persons. All Christian ambassadors, when introduced into the presence of the Sultan, were held back by both arms, on the supposition that they would like to be assassins if they dared.

It was trade, as is always the case, which led the way to diplomacy. In the days of Queen Bess the Levant Company was formed, only of a few people, only for short terms of years. The Levant Company wanted an ambassador. Queen Bess had no objections; but she had a frugal mind, and she told the Levant Company that if they wanted an ambassador they must pay him themselves. The Company demurred to the suggestion. The State Papers of the day had many references to the matter. If you run through the Calendars issued by the Master of the Rolls, the notices of this and the next reign are full of the matter. We are sorry to say that Queen Bess implored the Sultan to send a fleet 'against that idolater, the King of Spain.'

Probably not many of our readers are acquainted with the goodly folio which records negotiations with the Ottoman Porte, in the last years of James I. and the first years of Charles I., conducted by Sir Thomas Roe.

He went out to supersede an ambassador in disgrace, one Sir John Eyre. 'As I am not his judge, I will not be his accuser; there are enough prepared for that office. He had taken money by force, and pretends it was his right.' A very grave accusation to be brought against an ambassador, of all persons. Sir Thomas was a man perfectly well acquainted with commercial interests, and did his best to enforce them. He said of our English merchants that they were 'to the State as the liver to the body, which maintains the blood.' He was a grand old man, and his work is a very repertory of the history of his period. He resided in Constantinople in the wildest and most unsettled period of Ottoman history. It is claimed for him that he recovered from the Turks the respect due to ambassadors. Whenever they have dared, the Turks have treated ambassadors very insolently. During the half-dozen years of his residence he saw three or four Sultans, as many Grand Viziers, and all sorts of officers and others in rapid succession. He was a good man, who at one time redeemed eight hundred Christian captives from the Barbary corsairs. There are innumerable points worth notice suggested by his letters and despatches. The last Sultan whom he saw was Amurath IV. Now the reign of Amurath IV. is quite worth studying by English people who would understand what sort of person may be that chief and leader of the army of Turks who are dominant over the Christian populations of Europe. He had the frame of steel, the soul of fire. He illustrated the difference between the Turk on his carpet and the Turk on his steed. The *Arabian Nights* do not give such narratives of wild arbitrary cruelty. There is something like them in Pomponio Leti's stories of Sixtus

V., but Baron Hubner rejects them as fables. Amurath put to death a hundred thousand people, and he had a great fancy for putting them to death with his own hand. If a man came to his side whom he disliked, he would cleave his brain with his scimitar; if he saw a man in the street who, he thought, might be in his way, he despatched him with sure skilful arrow. Finding a road in bad repair, he hanged the chief judge of the district. His chief musician sang a Persian air; and, as he was at war with Persia, he ordered him to be beheaded. One day he saw a party of women dancing in a meadow; the noise disturbed him, and he ordered them to be drowned. Another day, a boat, with many ladies sailing along the Bosphorus, came rather too near the walls of the seraglio; he ordered a battery to open upon them, and the boat was sent to the bottom. He put an uncle and three brothers to death; and his last dying act was to order the execution of another brother. One is sorry that one of the finest gentlemen of his day should have had anything to do with the drunken sceptred scoundrel.

In 1716 Mr. Wortley Montagu was appointed ambassador to the Porte. His special object was to mediate between the Turks and the Imperialists. He was accompanied by his wife, with whom he had run away a few years before because her father had refused his consent through a disagreement about settlements. His embassy has been immortalised by the letters which Lady Mary wrote during this period, and which were published about half a century after they were written. At the time of this embassy Turkey was at the height of its pride and power. Mr. Wortley was consul-general of the Levant as well as ambassador. The *Weekly Journal*

of a Saturday in August states: 'On Wednesday, Edward Wortley Montagu, Esq., set forward on his embassy to Constantinople, and Thursday embarked at Gravesend for Holland.' Late in the year the *London Gazette* announces that he had left Constantinople for Hanover, with the design of returning. Various of his letters are preserved in the State-Paper Office; but his wife's letters to her friends are now thought of better value than tons of despatches. She describes Belgrade as being under the government of an insolent soldiery. She draws a frightful picture of the misgovernment of Servia. She was delighted with the beauty and the manners of the Turkish ladies; and her descriptions of harem-life are the most graphic and authentic that we possess. She gives one side of life at Constantinople, and Aaron Hill, who was there in Lord Paget's time, gives the opposite. Her embassy has the special feature of interest that at Constantinople she inoculated her son for smallpox, and so paved the way for vaccination. Mr. Wortley was succeeded by Mr. Stangar, who reports to Secretary Craggs that Mr. Wortley had sailed away on board a man-of-war. A letter in existence written by Addison to Mrs. Wortley, intimating to her the recall that was coming. The ostensible reasons were that he would be of greater use to his party in Parliament, and that the King was so very fond of him that it was a pity that he should be so far away. With such diplomatic flatteries and courtesies are the feelings of wounded ambassadors assuaged. We expect that it was during her residence at Constantinople that she imbibed that taste for foreign life which for many long years kept her an exile from her home and friends until she returned to England, and spent

a few months with her son-in-law, Lord Bute, the Premier, before she died.

We can only allude to a few other of the least-known names on the roll of ambassadors.

We have the interesting volumes which Sir James Porter wrote of his fifteen years' embassy.

Sir Robert Adair, who was sent out by Mr. Canning to negotiate the peace of the Dardanelles, published three volumes of his letters and despatches, somewhat arid reading. His object was, in 1809, to break up the French and Russian alliance; and as Sir Robert had married a French wife, it was suggested that he had better leave Lady Adair behind him, which naturally made him very angry. We find him complaining of Russian diplomatic letters as impudent letters, and of Russian schemes as unveiled and exposed schemes, which, we suspect, is the usual ambassadorial language. The great bugbear in his time, however, was not Russia, but France. We were never safer from Napoleon's dream of universal conquest. He could make his influence at Constantinople a stepping-stone to Persia and the more distant East. It was the French object to reduce the influence of England to the very lowest point. The French boundary had been brought down to the Save, and they possessed nearly all Croatia. When there was a danger of Constantinople falling to the enemy, Adair took upon himself to write to Malta to ask for supplies of powder and lead for our Turkish allies. He writes: 'I have begged 5000 quintals of gunpowder for them from Malta; but God knows whether I shall get it.' In these days, our ambassadors don't write for supplies, but get a squadron ordered into Besika Bay. Russia was very anxious to strike a bargain with Napoleon for the pos-

session of Constantinople. Bonaparte, however, shook his head; if anybody had it he would prefer to have it himself. 'Not Constantinople,' he muttered; 'it is the empire of the world.'

A somewhat ugly story is connected with Lord Ponsonby, but it belongs rather to Lord Palmerston than to him. It was the Circassian business. He told the Circassians that in a struggle with Russia England would intervene on their behalf, and they were left in the lurch. The name of Lord Ponsonby often recurs in the political history of Servia. The great political business in Servia since 1830 has been the question of a constitution. Here England suffered a great diplomatic defeat. All through her history she has constantly suffered great political defeats. Our history mainly consists of victorious campaigns and disastrous treaties. The new state of Servia obviously became of great importance in the future of the Eastern Question. The Russians kindly sketched out a 'basis' for a constitution, but England sent a political agent to Servia to counteract Russian policy. There is no doubt that Lord Ponsonby, through this agent, obtained great influence over the mind of Prince Milosch. He assured them of the protection of England, and that Servia was not such a long way off that England could not help her. The Russians, however, carried their point, and their 'basis' was accepted. These were days when Servia had not achieved its full later independence, and the English Government then vividly felt the anxiety which it feels at present, that Turkey should deal justly with her Christian provinces as the only means of preventing the dismemberment of the empire. We may consider Lord Ponsonby's period as a time when England

really had a controlling voice in Servian councils, and her influence stood for a time even higher than Russia's.

But of all the ambassadors who have resided in Constantinople, none left such an impress of character and power as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. All through Turkey the name of 'Inglese' was as potent as was even that of *Civis Romanus*. Every Englishman could appeal with safety to his consul, and each consul was secure of support at the embassy. He was the great Eltchi. The austere purity of his life, the integrity of his character, astonished and overawed a people who were not familiar with such phenomena, either in their own social condition or their experiences of foreign ambassadors. The decrees which issued from the palace at Dolmabahçtché were like fiat of fate. Mr. Kinglake, with a little humour and a little satire, calls him 'an imperfect Christian, for his temper was fierce; he followed up his opinions with his feelings, and with the whole strength of his imperious nature.' 'It was hard to resist the imperious ambassador to his face. If what he directed was inconsistent with the nature of things, then possibly the nature of things would be changed by the decree of Heaven, for there was no hope that the great Eltchi would relax his will.' The great Eltchi seems after his return to have abandoned foreign politics and confined his attention to writing dramas about King Alfred and arguments on the truth of Christianity; but lately he has set forth his ideas about the solution of the Eastern Question, and probably we shall have to fall back on some such scheme as he has enunciated.

It was an evil day for Turkey when he departed. Any ambassador would be unavoidably weak

in comparison; but the ambassadors who succeeded were not really strong men. Sir Henry Bulwer came next. He was a man who had won a high diplomatic character, but that reputation was pale and thin when compared with the mighty Eltchi. People said of him that he became too much of a Turk himself—that he affected Turkish ways and affected Turkish indolence. It was in his time that Prince Gortschakoff complained that the Sublime Porte had entirely neglected to carry out the body of public ordinances that had been issued in favour of the Christian population. These ordinances had never been really promulgated, or in any degree have been efficiently acted upon. It is little to the credit of the diplomatic service, or of Lord Dalling personally, that, so to speak, he ‘tipped the wink’ to the consuls that they should give answers which would, as little as possible, give any colour to the Russian complaint. The way in which he snubbed Mr. Longworth, who ventured to speak and think for himself, will long be a tradition in the consular service. Sir Henry Bulwer was the first to protest against the organisation of a national army in Servia. When the history of Servia is written, it will be seen that it was the personal influence of Sir Henry with Prince Michael which prevented the war between Servia and Turkey in '62.

Five years afterwards we had Lord Lyons. The Turks remembered the splendid services which his father had performed in their cause, and were not ungrateful. The Turks liked him, and, unfortunately, he did not like the Turks. He left soon, but not until he had endeared himself with many kindly memories.

We have left out of his proper place Earl Cowley, who com-

menced his ambassadorial career at Constantinople. Lord Cowley, in his noble abode at Therapia, lived serene, accomplishing what has always been his great mission, through a long diplomatic career, of letting things alone, and keeping them quiet. It was this happy art which made him permanent ambassador at Paris, during which period he won his earldom, and came in for the Mornington estates.

Lord Lyons' successor was Sir Henry Elliot, but it can hardly be said that with all his good qualities he has sufficiently sustained the prestige of the English name. He adopted the old traditional policy, but it is doubtful whether he has succeeded in modifying it to fresh emergencies. He will be reinforced at the council-table of the Conference by one of the most astute, straightforward, and hard-hitting of modern statesmen, who has gathered up on his journey all the public opinion of Europe.

The great point of interest in Lord Salisbury's mission is, that it opens up an entirely new stage in our diplomatic relations with Turkey. Our diplomacy has passed through various stages. First, there were our commercial interests; then there was Elizabeth's nefarious idea that England and Turkey should unite to put down idolatry, which made some Turks suppose that all Englishmen were idolaters in heart; then we had the great political doctrine of the balance of power, and that it is our mission to preserve a barrier, first against the encroachments of France, and afterwards against the encroachments of Russia. This object is certainly not lost sight of; but for the first time, like the Emperor Napoleon, we have imported ‘an idea’ into the matter. The ‘idea’ is, that our Christian brethren in Turkey want sym-

thy and support; that it is our duty to save them if we can from massacre and misgovernment; that the era of promises is past and the era of material guarantees must set in. Lord Salisbury is identified with an ecclesiastical party which is thoroughly sympathetic with the Greek Church; he has fairness, sympathy, ability, and high courage. His mission must be successful if Russia is sincere in her avowed views; but if the old Muscovite lust of territory is uppermost, then are we at a fresh beginning of sorrows.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CLUB-SYSTEM.

LOOKING through one of Theodore Hook's brilliant novels the other day, one was struck by the position which coffee-houses and hotels held in the story. The same may be said of some of the fictions of Charles Dickens. Men asked their friends to a dinner in the coffee-room or a private room at the Piazza, or the Tavistock, or the Old Hummums. Covent Garden was the region which corresponded with the modern Pall Mall. In British fiction we read the history of modern manners. The modern novelist has entirely shifted his ground from the coffee-house to the club. Little dinners can no longer be given at the hotels to the same extent that they used to be; they are given at clubs, particularly at those where the *chef* is famous for his *cuisine*. The club-system has moreover within the last few years witnessed an enormous development and extension. Fashion has of course had a great deal to do with it, but clubs have utilities and pleasures which meet a real need. In an increasing degree London clubs are required for others than Londoners. The country member who wants a *pied à terre* in town is an

increasingly important personage, and it is on his behalf that so many new clubs have sets of bedrooms attached. One remarkable feature, consequent on the expansion of clubs, is the immense predominance of very young men. Once there was a time when young men were in a minority at most clubs, but this is no longer the case. Most of the extravagances of the club is theirs. Paterfamilias comes to the club, and has his cut at the joint and quiet pint of sherry, while champagne is flowing like water at the youngsters' tables. Perhaps he only comes down because his study is being disturbed or his wife is going to give a party. I know a man—rather testy, I allow—who, when this sort of thing is coming off, leaves his house and takes a lodging in the neighbourhood for a week or two. Of course it is an advantage that young men should have a club to fall back on for a quiet evening; but the advantage may be neutralised by luxury and play. What such clubs may be we have seen delineated in the stories of Mr. Trollope and Shirley Brooks.

There never was a heavier crush of competition for admission into the great elder clubs than at the present time. The candidate must wait ten years for his turn. He must secure a hundred friends to support him. There are always people who are prepared to black-ball a stranger as a safe general principle. It is not a very amiable principle, but it helps to maintain the selectness of a club. It is calculated that for the Athenæum a man ought to beat up some hundred and fifty supporters. Yet the expenses of the Athenæum have greatly increased within recent years, and the old literary character is impaired. In the same way the Garrick is not at all, as it used to be, the great place for actors and

authors; it is in some sort a fashionable resort of peers and guardsmen. The old element, that of newspaper writers, actors, critics, is to be found much more extensively in lowlier clubs. There is a whole diapason of clubs, extending from the club called *THE CLUB*, and will own no other title—Johnson's famous club, which still gloriously subsists—to those where a landlord lets off a part of his house or his hotel. But the extension has been not only in a vertical, but in a lateral direction. Recently, owing mainly to the intense pressure, we have seen new clubs, like *Minerva*, springing in full panoply from the brain of Jove, at once at the acme of dignity and fashion. Take the two great political clubs, the *Devonshire* and *St. Stephen's*. There is not much to choose between the *Carlton* and the *Junior Carlton*, between the *Athenæum* and the *Junior Athenæum*—at least in the opinions of the junior clubs. As for internal organisation, the club-system is so perfected that most clubs are scarcely susceptible of improvement in details. They mainly differ in the prestige of the members, and their excellence of kitchen and cellar.

But clubs are not the clubable places which they used to be. They are now too vast to be social. You may be almost lost in the splendid solitude of the library and drawing-room. Unless you belong to a set, it is not your club that will bring you into one. Moreover, in the extension of the club-system is included the fact that many men have a passion for clubs, and get themselves enrolled members of an absurd number. We can quite understand a man belonging to an old club, *Brooks's*, *White's*, or *Boodle's*, and having his political club, *Carlton* or *Reform*, with a social club like the *Marlborough*, if he be a friend of the Prince's;

but what is the use of a man having seven or eight clubs? He will say that he likes one for its dinners, another for its cards, a third for its library, a fourth for its billiards, a fifth for its supper, a sixth for its society, and so on; but a man of many clubs really loses, instead of gaining, the peculiar benefit of each. Still the old social element is not vanished. It is most complete at the *Marlborough*, the peculiar domain of the most social of princes.

There is one club in particular where I often have the privilege of being a guest. It would be called a small club by outsiders, but it has so many names famous in literature and art that I can hardly regard this as a correct assignation. Now at this club we are particularly social and clubable—something in the old eighteenth-century style of the *Turk's Head*. Every member, by the fact of membership, is supposed to be the friend and acquaintance of every other member. There never is a time when there is not pleasant talk and genial companionship. There is a club-dinner at seven; no man is expected to dine in solitary state if he can possibly help it. Towards midnight there is a supper-table spread, whereat men, who have dropped in perchance from theatres and newspaper-offices, sit down and partake of cheering viands. They are most seductive fellows, the youngsters at that club. You hear much in their flying talk which you afterwards recognise in the daily press and the comic papers. In the midst of the roaring fun you suspect that they are mutually employed in picking each other's brains. Before you get home the doubtful stars may be struggling with the gray dawn. You are not quite the same as you were in the days when *Plancus* was consul. You confess you have

enjoyed yourself, but it is a pleasure to be partaken of sparingly and at distant intervals.

There have been more new clubs within the last five years than within the fifteen years preceding. It is not only that there are new clubs, but that the clubs themselves develop. A club begins a modest existence in a quiet street. Then it builds itself a mansion, or finds some institution or public building on a large scale which is opportunely put up for sale. By and by it is battering away at the neighbouring buildings to enlarge itself. Then the entrance-fee is raised again, and the subscription; and if the club has turned out a popular one, the entrance-fee will be raised again, but otherwise 'you may speculate for a fall.' The fact that all the best clubs are overcrowded always presents an opening for a crop of new ones. The majority of them are proprietary clubs, the proprietor being virtually the landlord of great hotels. He gets some good name as a secretary, and it is the secretary who mainly brings together a good committee or set of committees. You certainly have not the liabilities of a speculation, but then you pay hotel-prices, and not club-prices. You have simply to compare the wine-lists, supposing that the wine committees are equally good, and you see the difference. One great cause of the extension of clubs is this proprietary system, in which, nevertheless, if the proprietor is wise, he keeps out of sight as much as possible.

It is remarkable to see also how the club-system has spread into the provinces. Manchester and Leeds have several clubs. The club at Bradford is one of the best clubs in the kingdom. But a few miles off, at Halifax, the local club, considered as a club, is but of little importance. Bath

and Clifton have their clubs, something of the Rag and Famish order, but with the incurable weakness of running away much into gossip, the unavoidable defect of all watering-place clubs. There is no club pleasanter in its way, and no nobler place, than the Royal Western Yacht Club at Plymouth. All yacht-clubs are immensely pleasant; but the situation of this club on the Hoe, with that wonderful Sound in front, and the Mount Edgcumbe grounds on the west, is uniquely superb. You may see also in this club how admirably cheapness and goodness may be combined.

The ladies are now in real earnest setting up clubs of their own. There are several of them in the provinces. At Exeter there is a particularly good one, appropriately enough, next door to the gentlemen's club. In London the want has for some time been overlooked, but there is a good one forming in Regent-street.

So much, then, for the marvelous extension of the club-system. There is some reason to suppose, however, that this system has well-nigh reached the highest point of development. It has never been a favourite institution with the British matron, and that idea of hers in getting up a club of her own is mainly a spiteful one after all. It is to show her lord that she can do without him, and can do as he does. But it is a wholesome kind of competition to make home so pleasant that the club is uncomfortable in the comparison. It is not so much that a man cares for liveried servants, spacious rooms, and multiplied luxuries. A club is useful in so many ways—for meeting people, for letter-writing, for asking a man to dinner. A man may work away at a subject for many hours, and pick up more about it by a few hours in a

club than by all the books and newspapers. But a man can have all the new books left at his house from the libraries, and he is obliged to take in some of the best periodicals, and expenditure for entertainment is much better laid out when for the common benefit of the home circle, and he can get repose and ease at home; and so when he can with pleasure accept the conditions of home-life, he will be won from wild gregarious instincts, and take his place with Mr. Darwin's 'Animals and Plants under Domestication.' The rapid increase of clubs is not quite a healthy symptom, and we should not be altogether sorry to witness an abatement.

NEW BOOKS.

OF course the Eastern Question has produced a whole crop of books. The gentlemen and ladies who had previously written on the Eastern Question, and established some sort of reputation as authorities, naturally enough rushed into print once more. Mr. Lewis Farley, in the title of his work,* engages to settle the Eastern Question; but we read the work in a state of amazement, for he seems to be unsaying and denying everything which he had ever written in favour of Turkey. Mr. Denton has republished his *Christians of Turkey*,† having considerably added to his book of thirteen years ago, and brought it completely down to the present date. Mr. Denton preserves a prudent silence about the Greek bishops, who, conniving with the Moslems, have unmercifully fleeced their flocks. He has always been clear,

definite, and unmistakable in his views. He makes it abundantly clear, which indeed is substantiated by ample evidence in other quarters, that the Christians suffer most iniquitously at the hand of their Moslem oppressors, and that it is utterly hopeless to expect any amelioration in their condition, or indeed any kind of reform from Mussulman rule. From the experiences of millions of human beings this must be taken as a final historical law. We believe that the true solution will be the occupation of the subject Christian provinces until the present evil conditions are swept away; but the occupation ought not to be Russian, but British or French, Swiss or Austrian. It unfortunately happens that those who are wide awake to the misfortunes of the Christians seem to close their eyes to the intrigues of the Russ. We should find out the true conditions of this Eastern problem, and thus reconcile them as we best may. We are sorry to hear loud and increasing whispers in favour of the Czar Nicholas's old policy of Russia taking Turkey, and England receiving Crete and Egypt. We only wonder how the advocates for the Christians can argue in favour of such unchristian robbery and spoliation. An excellent little book about Turkey and its history has been issued by the Religious Tract Society.* It may be called a geographical history of Turkey. The historical narrative is meagre; but the book is full of useful information conveyed in the pleasantest way. The same Society has issued a companion publication, *Slavs and Turks*,† which will be

* *Turks and Christians: a Solution of the Eastern Question.* By J. Lewis Farley. (Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.)

† *The Christians of Turkey: their Condition under Mussulman Rule.* By the Rev. W. Denton, M.A., author of *Servia and the Servians*. (Daldy, Isbister, & Co.)

* *The Turkish Empire: the Sultans, the Territory, and the People.* By Rev. T. Milner, M.A. New edition. (Religious Tract Society.)

† *Slavs and Turks: the Border Lands of Islam in Europe.* (Religious Tract Society.)

found extremely interesting and useful. Mr. Forsyth has just reprinted his papers on the same subject from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but his publication is not so full, clear, and impartial as that issued by the Society we have mentioned. Akin to these are several works of Eastern travel which have excited a good deal of attention on their appearance. Besides the general interest always attaching to such travels, they have a special interest at the present time, owing to their reference to Russia. It is of great importance, while carefully avoiding anything like Russophobia, accurately to gauge the views of Russia, and make our own calculations accordingly. Captain Burnaby* maintains that at the present moment we could without any European ally drive the Russians from Central Asia, but that if we permit them to annex further provinces the advantage of attack would be on their side. He considers that we should intimate to the Russian Government that a further advance in our direction would be regarded as a *casus belli*. The Emperor Alexander himself is said to be strongly opposed to the policy of annexation, but nevertheless there have been the widest annexations in his time. Russian officers in Central Asia are longing for a war with England about India, which indeed would be very popular in European Russia, and in Russia military opinion is practically public opinion.

Captain Burnaby was induced to undertake this journey in a very characteristic way. He was at Khartoum, on the Nile, when his eye happened to alight on a newspaper paragraph stating that the Government of St. Petersburg had given orders that no foreigner should be

* *A Ride to Khiva: Travels and Adventures in Central Asia*. By Fred. Burnaby, Captain Royal Horse Guards. (Cassell, Petter, & Galpin.)

allowed to travel in Central Asia. Captain Burnaby immediately resolved that he would go to Central Asia. He knew, however, that this could not be done without a permit from the Russian Government, which he obtained with less difficulty than he had expected. The personal element in the book is full of interest. There is a horrible narrative where the author was momentarily expecting that his feet and hands would drop off through frost-bite. They were only saved through the happy accident of some spirits of naphtha being at hand. The Russian authorities kept a sharp eye upon him, although he was permitted to travel about, and even gain entrance into Khiva itself. He found the Khan profuse in his expressions of regard towards the English people. His recall did not proceed, however, from the Russian Government, but from our own War Office. The telegram was from H.R.H. Field-Marshal the Duke of Cambridge, commanding his immediate return from Asiatic Russia to European Russia. Thus his work of careful observation, which might have been useful to England, was suddenly cut-off from England itself. Was it that Russian influence was brought to bear at the Horse Guards? It would be interesting to the public if H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge would condescend to give some information on the subject.

Mr. Munro Butler-Johnstone, one of the members for Canterbury, has issued a second edition of his *Trip up the Volga, to the Fair of Nijni Novgorod*.* About ten years ago Mr. Forsyth, M.P., also wrote a similar book, but it was for private circulation only, the edition being limited to fifty copies. Both parliamentary writers get at least half-way through the book before

* Parker, Oxford and London.

they come to the great fair, the greatest in the world. Captain Burnaby says in his book: 'An English gentleman, a well-known M.P., foreseeing the rise which would take place in the value of property near Samara, has bought a large and beautiful estate in that neighbourhood. According to my companion, he would double the capital invested, should he in the course of a few years wish to part with his purchase.' We wonder if the M.P. is Mr. Forsyth or Mr. Johnstone. Mr. Butler-Johnstone, as his nature is, of course goes into the high politics of the matter. He thinks that Russia is ten times stronger than she was at the time of the Crimean war. It may, however, be doubted whether Russia has improved to a greater extent than England has done. We shut Russia up at the time, but Mr. Johnstone says that was for her good. 'The consequence was that you gave an extension to her national industries for which her manufacturers are still deeply grateful.' At the time of Mr. Forsyth's visit the tea-trade of the fair was mainly an overland trade, but now the tea comes by sea and is cheaper.

But Mr. Schuyler's work* on Turkistan is beyond question the principal one of this class, and the book of travel of the moment. His political view is of course very different from that of English politicians. He wishes to see the Russians firmly settled in Central Asia as a counterpoise to the English power in India. We are surprised that his account of Russian atrocities in the East should have met with so much attention. It ought to have been no matter of surprise; Russian warfare has always been accompanied with atrocities. No histories can

be more horrible and horrifying than those which tell of the campaigns of Suwarrow and of Count Orloff. Mr. Schuyler's work, now in its fourth edition, has attracted such a large and deserved amount of attention that, instead of attempting within our limited space any epitome of the subject-matter, we recommend his fascinating pages at once to the reader of travel, who can enjoy these fresh strange pictures of Oriental life, and to the student of Central Asian problems for the light thrown upon a large political question now of urgent importance.

Mr. Barkley has written a bright sparkling book about his five years' residence in Bulgaria.* There is hardly anything of history or politics in it; he went out to lay down a railway, and tells all his adventures and misadventures. He had at times, very enviable luck with game, thirty-three brace of partridges in an afternoon. He says that Bulgaria is the best country in the world for ornithology, and had some thrilling adventures in collecting the eggs of eagles and vultures. He draws, almost without intending it, a frightful picture of the abuses and misgovernment of the country. But all through Turkish history we have similar narratives of dispassionate observers, and their depositions with an unvarying testimony tell us of that persistent evil which has never been mitigated, and of which no mitigation seems possible. It is cheering to read how an Englishman like Mr. Barkley knew how to flog and punish one of those beggarly zaptiehs. Here is his estimate of the bashi-bazouks, of whom about a thousand came to his district one day in government transports from Constanti-

* *Turkistan: Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkistan, Kokand, Bukhara, and Kuldja.* By Eugene Schuyler. (Sampson Low, Marston, & Co.)

* *Between the Danube and Black Sea, or Five Years in Bulgaria.* By Henry C. Barkley. (Murray.)

nople: 'If any other troops in Europe had behaved half as badly in a conquered enemy's country as these animals did at home, they would have been hanged by scores. . . . If the galleys and hulks of all Europe were searched, and a thousand of the worst characters picked out from among them, they would be orderly reasonable beings in comparison with these creatures.'

The handsome volume entitled *A Journal and Memoir of Commodore Goodenough*,* is a worthy and deserved memorial of a good man and an admirable sailor. James Graham Goodenough was the son of a dean, the grandson of a bishop, and had for his godfather no less a personage than the First Lord of the Admiralty. His way in his profession was made clear for him. His examination, in these days of competition, seems easy enough. He was told to sit down in an office and do a sum and a piece of dictation. But none the less he proved a very accomplished, useful, and zealous officer. He was essentially a man of modern views, and those in the best way. He was opposed to corporal punishment; he was in favour of giving the sailor abundance of leave; and he loved his men passionately. He spoke seven different languages. He saw arduous service in every part of the world; he was employed by the Government to go from country to country and collect information respecting the maritime strength of different Powers. He was strongly in favour of making the navy a scientific service, and urged its great opportunities for culture and the study of Nature. He was a man of rare character and gifts, which he improved and developed to the utmost. The affecting circumstances

of his death made his name familiar to all his countrymen. His death precisely resembled that of Bishop Pattison. He was attacked by the natives on an island in the Pacific, who, unknowing what they did, slew their truest friend. The wound was slight, but it had been made by a poisoned arrow. The last sentences in his last letter refer to this: 'The weather is lovely, and entirely favourable to the little wounds, which are absurdly small. My only trouble is a pain in the small of my back, which is a little against my sleeping. I am exceedingly well. . . . I have asked Perry to put out a statement for the papers, so that we may have no outrageously foolish stories. I can only imagine the motive to have been plunder, or a sort of running amuck. I don't feel—' Here the writing abruptly terminates. He sailed away from the island to die, refusing to allow a single life to be taken in retaliation. All England became acquainted with the story of his last hours, one of the most affecting ever penned.

We are very glad to notice in a collected form the entire poetical works of Ebenezer Elliott in a new and revised edition.* It is appropriately edited by his son, the Rector of St. John's, Antigua; for whom we might have hoped that an English benefice might have been provided by the political party who owed some portion of their success to the author of the *Corn-Law Rhymes*. We are not sure that the title of these songs has not, for many minds, blurred Mr. Elliott's true distinctive character as a poet. But from the early 'Juvenile Poems,' written when only in his seventeenth year, there is the true poetic ring about them,

* *Journal of Commodore Goodenough during his last Command on the Australian Station.* Edited, with a Memoir, by his Widow. (H. S. King & Co.)

* *Poems of Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn-Law Rhymist.* Edited by his Son, the Rev. Edwin Elliott, St. John's, Antigua. Two vols. (H. S. King & Co.)

a freshness and elevation of thought which will always attract readers. Reading the poems in their chronological order, we attain to what Wordsworth gave as the second title of his *Prelude*, 'The Growth of a Poet's Mind.' It is curious to look at the different dedications of the poems in a time when dedications were in fashion. One is inscribed to 'Henry Lytton Bulwer, Esq., who helped me when I was poor and helpless;' another to 'Robert Southey, who condescended to teach me the art of poetry;' another to 'G. Calvert Holland, M.D., who, by his efforts in favour of universal education, is

preparing better days for the England of my children and a brighter futurity for the human race;' another to James Montgomery, 'this fragment, an evidence of my presumption and my despair;' another to 'Henry Brougham, the friend of the poor and the champion of education.' There are similar dedications and annotations which give glances at his private history and his political opinions. With any critical drawbacks, Ebenezer Elliott is after all a national poet, and it is eminently right and befitting that the whole of his works should be gathered together in these goodly volumes.

A LIFEBOAT-MAN'S YARN.

LOOKS dirty, sir? Ay, you are right;
 And just here you feel it most.
 No, I ain't seen a rougher night
 Since the time the *Pearl* was lost.
 How was that then? If you don't mind
 We'll get to the under-cliff,
 Then I'll tell you—for this here wind
 Do blow most uncommon stiff.
 Now just let me think; it must be
 Nine years come next Christmas-day.
 Ay, nine years it is! Goodness me!
 How the time do slip away!
 Well, it blew 'great guns,' as we say,
 Three days from the Nor'-Nor'-West,
 And the fourth—that was Christmas-day—
 Instead of getting a rest,
 I am almost inclined to think
 It was blowing harder still.
 Well, as I was having a drink
 Along o' my chum, 'Long Bill,'
 About noon—to be quite correct—
 Upon that same Christmas-day,
 I heard tell that a ship was wreck'd
 Not fifty yards from the bay.

Well, of course, I ran to the shore,
And our crews turn'd out all hands ;
And when on the beach there we saw
A barque on the shifting sands.
It was clear she would not last long,
For when that 'bar' gets a *grip*,
The waves beat so terrible strong
They'd shatter the stoutest ship.
And this was but a little craft,
With seven men for a crew,
And they, with their skipper, stood aft
To see what we meant to do.
For it chanced to happen that we,
In bringing two men to shore,
Strain'd our boat in a heavy sea
Just the afternoon before.
As we hadn't got rockets then,
Why, the only thing to do
Was for one of us lifeboat men
To swim to the shipwreck'd crew.
All my mates was married, you see ;
As the only single chap,
Why, the one to go must be me,
For fear of a slight mishap.
For it's cruel, I reckon, sir,
When the man that wins the bread—
Him as feeds the young uns and her
Who's his wife—is brought home dead.
Was I frighten'd ? I can't quite say—
I hadn't much time, d'ye see—
But I said, by way of a pray,
'Our Father, watch over me !'
And, thinks I, if the time is nigh
When I must my cable slip,
Well and good ; but I meant to try
My hardest to reach that ship.
Yes, I own I had had enough
By the time the line was fast,
For them breakers was awful rough ;
But we saved 'em all at last.
But none of our fellows, I know,
Nor never one on this coast,
Could touch me at swimming ; and so
I haven't no call to boast.

JOSEPH SWIFT.

LONDON SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY 1877.

KISS AND TRY.

A Tale of St. Valentine.

'I won't marry for money, and I won't be married for money, and I won't marry at all; and when I do, I'll please myself—so *there!* You are so stupid, aunt Jane;' and the wilful little beauty stamped her foot, contradicting herself with a wrathful energy that would have done credit to an accomplished actress.

'My dear—'

'Don't "my dear" me! I'm not your *dear*. I can be *dear* to plenty of people if I choose.'

'My dear, really you are so impetuous, you'll never be married.'

'There it is again, that hateful topic. Can't you understand I don't want to? Why should I? I've got plenty of money; I've got a carriage, and two such pets of ponies, and a hunter, and a house in the country; what more do I want? I wish you would all let me alone. There's papa talking sorrowfully, silly old darling, about his declining years, and only me, and *me* not married; and if you are my aunt it's no reason you should worry me night and day. I *won't* have your lawyer if he's as rich as Croesus—how much has

he given you to plead his cause, eh?'

'You need not insult me, at all events. I counsel you for your own good, Miss Delaselle. Mr. Marshe is a most eligible person, most eligible. His father is in the front rank of his profession, and immensely rich; your papa approves of his suit. There is a possibility of the dormant peerage being revived in the favour of that family: Mr. Marshe senior has rendered great services in high quarters.'

'Thank you for your genealogical particulars. Now please tell me all about Captain Williams, and Theophilus Bishop, who will rise in the Church, and Sir Cornelius Wilkes, and Squire Thompson, and Mr. Burnaby, and Lieutenant Vane, and Lord Pauline, &c.'

'Really, you may well pause; the flirtations you carry on are beyond all belief. There were a dozen soldiers in the house yesterday.'

'And there'll be two dozen to-night, and I shall have at least a hundred valentines to-morrow morning. Everybody likes me; of

course they do. All the men know I don't try to trap them into marrying me, like the other girls. Ah, there's a ring; sure to be somebody to see me.'

'Shameful!' groaned aunt Jane, composing herself to her work.

Marie glanced in the mirror over the mantelpiece, smiled, and adjusted a stray curl.

'Aunt, don't you think I look awfully nice this evening?'

'Charming!' said a gentleman's voice, as the door was thrown open, and Mr. Marshe was announced. 'Pardon me, that dress is perfection.'

'Sir, I do not like personal remarks; they are extremely rude. However, your profession, I suppose, brings you into contact with vulgar people.'

'Marie!' reproachfully from aunt Jane.

'Miss Delaselle is privileged,' said Marshe, a dapper young man, not bad-looking, but obviously conceited. Marie said all little men were vain; and as for lawyers they seemed to consider it the duty of heiresses to marry them.

'What divorce case are you engaged in now, sir?' she asked.

'We do not undertake that class of work,' said Marshe loftily.

'Captain Williams—O, and Lord Pauline too! I am delighted to see you. We have been so dull this evening, have we not, aunt Jane?'

These new-comers hardly acknowledged the lawyer, who on his part surveyed them with intense scorn. 'Neither of them has a hundred pounds' cash,' thought he to himself, 'and yet such airs.'

Marie, however, was much more pleasant in her manner to them, which galled him extremely, yet he could not tear himself away; and after twenty times resolving

never to speak to her again, he had actually opened a tacit understanding with Mr. Delaselle.

She was, indeed, one of those girls of whom it may be justly said that there is no living with them nor without them.

He turned to pay court to aunt Jane, when the Rev. Theophilus Bishop arrived. He was acting for the present as a curate in town, till a valuable living, in the gift of a relative, should become vacant by the decease of the aged incumbent.

'You cruel man!' said Marie; 'I heard of your sermon; so, if a poor lady is deserted by her husband and gets a divorce, she is not to marry again?'

'We are opposed to such unions on the highest grounds, my dear Miss Delaselle. If we had only known that a divorcee was one of the contracting parties, we should have most certainly refused permission to use the sacred edifice.'

'Well, it's very hard. Don't you think so, Mr. Marshe?'

'To refuse would be illegal,' said the lawyer, glad of a chance of putting down one of his rivals, 'quite illegal, I feel sure, to say nothing of the bad taste.'

'By the ecclesiastical law—' began the curate, firing up in a moment.

'It's a confounded shame,' broke in Captain Williams.

'The ladies are deserving of every consideration,' said Lord Pauline, an aged *beau*, but well preserved. 'You may be sure the lady was the injured party.'

'Ecclesiastical law—' repeated the curate.

'Suppose it was me,' said Marie; 'suppose I had a brute of a husband—of course I never mean to have one, that's understood.'

'The premises are very lucid,' said the lawyer sarcastically.

'And—and I was divorced. 'Mustn't I—have—well—'

'You of course would be an exception,' said the curate; 'but as a rule such marriages are even more sinful than those contracted simply with a view to filthy lucre.'

This was a cut for Marsha.

'I hate women who marry for money,' said Marie; 'there's nothing so despicable.'

'Nothing so despicable,' echoed Captain Williams and Lord Pauline, neither of whom had a 'dollar.'

'Except a man's marrying a lady for her money,' added the curate, who was well provided for as far 'as the good things of this world went.' 'There should be a certain equality of position and of pecuniary means in order to insure mutual respect.'

'Mutual respect be hanged!' muttered Captain Williams, in his beard.

'What did I hear?' said the curate; 'the language of the barrack-room—'

'I say a girl that marries the man she loves is the truest and the best,' cried the captain loudly; 'whether he's poor or rich doesn't matter. She's the girl for me.'

To his surprise the captain caught Marie's eye fixed on him with an expression of sympathy that made his heart give a thump of delight. Could she? He was not such a bad fellow, this captain, though a trifle outspoken.

'I differ from you entirely,' said Lord Pauline. 'I think nothing shows a more cowardly character than for a man without a penny and without social position'—this was a hint at his own title—'to attempt to obtain the affections of a lady who might engage herself to great advantage.'

'Lord Pauline understands the world and human nature,' said

aunt Jane. 'His remarks are very just. O, good evening, sir,' with a marked emphasis on the 'sir.'

Marie merely bowed in a distant manner to the gentleman who had at that moment entered, and turned quickly towards the piano. They all crowded round her, and pressed her to play, scarcely deigning to exchange salutations with the new-comer, who was thus as it were excluded from the circle—except Captain Williams, who welcomed him cordially.

"'Tis poverty parts good company," whispered he, quoting the old song. 'Never mind, old fellow; you're twenty times more a man than these miserable drumstick imitations. By Jove, what a chest you have!'

Thurstan Baynard was indeed 'a man of inches,' and broad in proportion—perhaps rather more than in proportion—though he had hardly yet reached his full development, being but twenty-six. A long silky black beard, thick curling moustaches, bright dark eyes, an open wide forehead, and rather massive head, gave him no inconsiderable claim to be called handsome. Thurstan was one of those men, sometimes met, who seem to possess every possible advantage except money. He was tall and strong, certainly good-looking, agreeable in manner, well read, and still better travelled—he had, for a time, carried despatches as a Queen's Messenger—full of animal health and naturally joyous temperament, saddened, however, by the perpetual sense of impecuniosity and the pressure of petty debt. His family was well connected, of ancient descent, and yet practically he was a vagabond upon the face of the earth. The families of Baynard and Delaselle were branches of the same stock; he and Marie had played together

as children, and he was still free of the house; but when growing years seemed to threaten the danger of an imprudent attachment, Mr. Delaselle spoke to him in private very seriously on the matter, 'hoping that he would not take advantage of his position to compromise Marie's chances of an eligible match.' This was extremely bitter to Thurstan, whose proud spirit was deeply wounded; and henceforward he came rarely, and adopted a deferential distant manner.

Marie, on her part, scarcely noticed him now that they were arrived, he at manhood and she at womanhood. He thought it was pride; still he felt constrained to call occasionally, for in truth he loved her beyond expression.

Nothing destroys a man's spirit like poverty, especially if he still by birth belongs to that class of whom it was said *noblesse oblige*, and cannot fully descend to the little meannesses too often compulsorily practised by those who earn their daily bread. There were as yet no lines upon his forehead, but there was an indescribable expression of subdued pain.

'I've come to say good-by,' said he to Captain Williams, as the two sat together in the background, while Marie played and sang gaily. Mr. Delaselle just nodded as he entered, and then devoted himself to Mr. Marshe.

'Where are you off to, then?' asked the captain. 'Why on earth don't you go into the army?'

'Can't afford it—and can't live on thirteenspence a day either. No; I'm going to China; you know I've studied fortification. I've an idea I could help them to fortify themselves against the Russians. They are much alarmed at Russian aggression eastwards. General Kauffman's guns easily smashed up the wretched walls

and towers of the Central Asian Khans. I think China ought to pay well for instruction how to build redoubts *à la Vauban*.'

'It's not a bad idea; but how about leaving Miss Delaselle? I thought you were— Well, no matter; you're just the man for her. Yes, I'll say that even against my own interest. She'll be snapped up before you get back, man. Look at Marshe, and that prig the curate, and the old lord—pah! Are you sure *she* doesn't care for you?'

'She scarcely acknowledges me,' said Thurstan. 'And yet we used to— Still she has a right to do as she pleases. At all events, I start to-morrow night for Southampton from Waterloo Station—'

'I'll see you off. By Jove, I'm sorry, deuced sorry! The best fellows are always shoved into a corner. To-morrow night—it's St. Valentine's-day to-morrow, now I think of it.'

Just then Marie's voice, blithe and rich in tone, began with an inimitable expression of innocent mischievousness, so to say, the old verse:

'A' the lads they look at me,
Coming through the rye.'

'It's just like her,' said the captain; 'and yet do you know, Thurstan, I believe there's something good in that girl despite all this frivolity. I wish you could have seen her just now when they were discussing marriages for money, and I said the best and truest girl was the one who married for love. There was a flash in her eye—I don't think she knows her own heart yet.'

'Mr. Baynard,' cried Marie suddenly, from her seat at the piano, 'come and sing our old favourite, "Annie Laurie."'

The circle sneered at the mention of so simple a ballad. He hesitated; but she insisted, and

finally he sang it—sang it as only a man could do who *felt* every line. It was true that she had never pledged her word, but she was indeed 'all the world' to him. He had a beautiful voice, bell-like, yet liquid, and, to alter just one word of Byron,

'Love hath not, in all his choice,
An arrow for the heart like a sweet voice.'

They were all silent when he ceased. Marie indeed seemed to recover herself with an effort, and thanked him gently, in a tone that nearly unmanned him.

'Dear me!' cried the lawyer; 'I've forgotten I had a telegram to leave at the office. Excuse me. I'll return.'

Mr. Delaselle accompanied him to the door.

'Something very despicable in business,' said Lord Pauline.

'Very despicable, very,' echoed the curate. 'Contact with the coarser natures who seek the aid of the law must naturally react upon those who listen to their revelations.'

'I believe there is a great fire,' said Mr. Delaselle, reëntering; 'let us go up to the high windows to see.'

The gentlemen and aunt Jane, who had a special horror of fire, followed him quickly; and Marie was moving in the same direction, when Thurstan, who had stood aside to let the others pass first, spoke her name gently.

She paused, and for the moment they were alone.

'Yes,' she said kindly.

'I—I just called to say good-bye; I start for China to-morrow night—some years before I may see you again,' said Thurstan, in a hurried and confused manner.

'Is this true?'

'It is, indeed, quite true. You will remember me sometimes, Marie?' he almost said 'my darling,' but his courage failed.

Her eyes fell; she flushed slightly.

'Yes, I shall remember you. Stay, let me think—hush! Is it a fire?' she added, in a different tone, hearing footsteps.

'At a great distance; no danger,' said Mr. Delaselle. Aunt Jane glanced suspiciously from Thurstan to Marie, and back again.

He felt that he was looked on as *de trop*; and confused, believing too that to stay longer would be simply to prolong his torture wished them good-night, and left what he had almost nerved himself to say to Marie still unsaid, and now probably beyond his power to say.

A certain stiffness fell upon the party, and Marie seemed to have lost her gaiety, till in less than an hour Marshe returned, and she brightened up, to the great delight of aunt Jane and Mr. Delaselle, who saw in this a sign of affection for him, and were reassured.

Marshe was very lively. The fact was he thought he had done a clever thing.

It was this. Driving to the office of the firm, Marshe, Marshe, & Copp, he recollected that he had a valentine in the pocket of his overcoat. It was a very expensive one, which he had selected with much care, containing a few love verses of the approved order, surrounded with a gorgeous design, and perfumed. He argued with himself *pro* and *con*, after the manner of the judicial mind, as he drove along, whether he should address the envelope himself in his own proper handwriting, or whether he should disguise his style, or get some one else to assist him. This highly important question has agitated the hearts of valentine senders ever since the graceful old custom began.

Clearly, if directed in his own handwriting, Marie, who knew it

well, would recognise the sender immediately; of mystery there would be none, and the fun would be lost.

If the address was written by a stranger it was ten chances to one that she would never fix upon him, in which case the valentine might as well be thrown in the fire at once. What was to be done? A Frenchman would say that the answer to this apparently trifling question decided his destiny. It was still open when he reached the offices of the great firm, in which his part was really merely nominal. In these vast businesses each partner has one department to himself, and perhaps scarcely ever hears the name of the clients of the others; this young man, pert and fashionable in his ways, thought no more of his profession than was absolutely forced upon him. They were working very late that night; his father was sitting still, getting up a matter for a parliamentary committee—the telegram he had forgotten referred to this.

'Ah, Jones,' said he to a confidential clerk who had a room to himself, a kind of antechamber to the great man's, 'just put this letter in a large envelope, one with the firm's initials on,—only the initials, mind,—and direct it with the type-writer to Miss Delaselle, * * * *, Mayfair. Have it ready for me.'

In this way he thought he had conquered the difficulty. The writing-machine really prints exactly like type; but the initials would leave a clue to guess by. Clever young man!

Jones, so soon as his back was turned, smiled, and smelt the letter. 'Aha!' thought he, 'I'll have a look: it's a valentine; I can smell the perfume.'

The envelope was but just stuck; he loosened it, and pulled

out the valentine, laying it on a long letter he had just finished with the machine. Hardly had he taken a peep when the door opened again, and Marshe stood in the opening—still, however, with his back turned—talking to the principal. In an awful fright, Jones upset all his papers, crammed the valentine and the long letter hastily into envelopes, and wrote the directions like lightning.

'That will do—capital!' said Marshe, taking the valentine. 'It's rather an awkward-looking parcel, though. Give me that other letter; I'll send them both to post by the boy as I go down-stairs.'

He dashed back rapidly to Marie, who, as soon as he arrived, became as merry as ever, and raised his hopes exceeding high. When the evening closed, Marshe thought to himself, 'She has evidently come round. I'll strike while the iron is hot, and put the question to-morrow night. By the bye, that ill-favoured Thurstan I hear is off to Hong-Kong. Glad of it; always had a lurking suspicion there was something between them.'

Who, in all great London, should have been so happy as Marie that night? Rich, fêted, with crowds of admirers, and sure to have a hundred valentines next morning!

Would any one have believed that she never slept all night, but passed the weary hours, thinking, thinking, thinking, and frequently shedding tears. Till Thurstan was about to leave her, in all human probability for ever, she had never known how much she loved him. Indeed, she had hardly ever felt that she had a heart; life had been one long round of joyous frivolity. Now she knew the utter nothingness of all the nicknacks of wealth. Of what use were dozens of ad-





H.M. Cutts

'Stanny, you're a big man—a giant—and O, so strong; can't you push your way in the crowd?'

See 'Kiss and Try,' p. 103.

[illegible]



mirers if he was not there? She remembered Captain Williams's blunt declaration that the best and truest woman was the one who married for love. Poor Thurstan had not a penny. Some of these men who courted her had shown such bad taste as to describe the shifts he was sometimes put to; instinctively they felt he was a dangerous rival, and thought to hold him up to contempt.

'I *know* he loves me,' she said to herself; 'why has he never said so? It is this money; he is too proud to have me think he woos me for my money. To-morrow I shall lose him for ever.'

From sheer exhaustion she fell asleep at last, and was awakened by her maid, who brought a salver to her bedside, perfectly heaped up with letters. Here were the hundred valentines!

Scarcely twenty hours before she had looked forward to this moment with delight; now she pushed the heap away as a vanity and vexation of spirit.

'Perhaps Thurstan has sent one,' she thought presently, and turned them over, seeking the well-remembered handwriting. 'No, not even a valentine; very likely he is too poor to buy one that he thinks good enough for me. What is this thick letter? What curious writing! It's printing, I think.'

Curiosity impelled her to open it. She read and read, and a colour rose in her cheeks.

'Is it possible!' she cried, and sprang up. 'I'll do it! I *will*! I don't care!'

Hurriedly she wrote a note, and despatched it to Thurstan's chambers. A bold thing doubtless; but reflect, they had been playmates. It ran thus:

'Miss Delaselle and Mr. Delaselle would like to see Mr. Baynard early in the day, that they may

wish him farewell. They will feel much hurt if he does not come.'

'Good Heavens!' she thought, 'if it should not reach him; if he should not come!'

Thurstan, indeed, did hesitate, feeling that to see her again would be a severe trial. But love, all-powerful love, would not be denied. He went. She had so arranged that he found her alone in her boudoir.

'It's extremely rude of you, sir, to force me to write to you.' Now he was there, she could not resist the temptation to play with the mouse she had caught. 'Why did you not tell me before that you were going?'

Thurstan, unhappy and down-hearted, could not meet her light tone with answering railery. He stammered some excuse.

'And *why* are you going, sir?'

'I must obtain a living somewhere.'

'Why not in England?'

'The competition is so great. And everybody despises me because I am poor.'

'Stanny,' said she, using an old familiar abbreviation, and placing her little hand on his broad shoulder, 'Stanny, you're a big man—a giant—and O, so strong; can't you push your way in the crowd?'

'I've tried,' said he simply.

'No, you haven't. I tell you what, Stan—I'm not afraid of you, though you are so big—you're a coward! There—O, don't flash your eyes at me! You're afraid, and so you are running away. You'll cry next, I suppose' (this was very cruel, Marie, bitterly cruel). 'You're not half so brave as I am. Men are not half so brave as women' (her voice sank lower, and she looked at him, and her eyes suddenly filled with tears, though he, gazing away, did not see it). 'Do you know what I should do if I were in your place?'

Something in her tone made him glance at her with a strange sensation in his throat.

'What would you do if you were me?' he said.

'Kiss and try,' she whispered softly, letting her head droop against his shoulder.

He did it. There are no words by which so sudden a revulsion of feeling can be described. The half-hour that followed was the happiest in his life. Suddenly he remembered himself.

'I am so poor,' he said. 'Forgive me—they will say it was your money.'

'Are you sure you are so poor?' she said archly.

'Quite sure.'

'Then read that,' and she put Marshe's valentine into his hand.

He tried to, but he could not take his gaze from her; and the letters seemed confused.

'Listen,' she said, and read it. Slowly the truth dawned upon him. Jones, the clerk, in his hurry, fearing to be caught peeping, had put the letter and the valentine in the wrong envelopes, or rather confused the addresses. Marie got, instead of a valentine, a long letter from Copp, the second principal of the firm, which had been really meant for Thurstan. The valentine went Heaven knows where. Of course, how it happened was not found out till afterwards, but there was no mistaking the contents of the letter.

Copp in formal phrase informed Mr. Thurstan Baynard that by the terms of the will of General Sir Frederick Baynard, just deceased—a distant relation who had never previously owned him—he was entitled to a very large sum in consols, and still more valuable estates; *provided*—ah, whenever was there a blessing without a black side (?)—*provided* that within the space of twelve

months he married a lady possessed of not less than a given amount, upon whose children the whole was to be settled. The old man was a miser, and it had been the work of his life to rehabilitate the fallen fortunes of the family. Casting about for a means of keeping the money he had painfully amassed in the family, he had hit upon this odd but not unreasonable idea.

'So you see,' said Marie, 'you're richer than I am. Perhaps you won't have me now?'

His answer was a fresh embrace.

'Ah,' she said, mocking his previously mournful tone, 'I'm so poor now compared to you, you'll think it was your money.'

'Incorrigible,' said he, kissing her.

'Incorrigible, indeed,' cried aunt Jane, who had entered unseen. 'This really is shameful—most ungentelemanly.'

'He is richer than—everybody,' said Marie, laughing. 'This is the most beautiful valentine I ever had.'

'And this is the most beautiful one I ever had, or ever shall have,' said he, laying his hand on her shoulder with an air of possession that horrified aunt Jane.

Matters, however, were soon explained, and her objections melted away, as did Mr. Delaselle's.

They were married early in May, Captain Williams being Thurstan's best man.

'I was certain she loved you,' he said. 'I can understand now what she meant on St. Valentine's eve when she looked at me so meaningly, when I said the best and truest woman was the one that married for love. She loved you when you were poor. You ought to be grateful to St. Valentine all your life!'

RICHARD JEFFERIES.

DRAWING-ROOM AMUSEMENTS.

PART II.

THIS part will be found to contain the more simple games suitable for drawing-rooms. It does not include, by any means, the whole of them, for their name is legion; but contains a selection of the best—indeed, of all those which are distinguished by anything like an idea—and some which are not generally known, but which have been fished up from the recesses of Scotch and French country houses, where they most do flourish. There are many of the games coming under this division which scarcely require a detailed description, but which are nevertheless well worthy of mention. Such is the time-honoured and ever-delightful battledore and shuttlecock, which I recommend my readers not to play in a hall where valuable china vases are standing about. Neither can it be played out of doors, unless it be upon the stillest of summer afternoons, when the breezes are hushed, the tree-tops tranquil, and the lawn quite dry. Let not two of the same sex either venture to think that they can adequately pass their time by a devotion to this exciting pastime; but let sweet seventeen, with a *robe courte*, looped up just high enough to show the twinkling feet, be matched against valiant twenty in knickerbockers, and it will be found capable of furnishing amusement for hours in its most simple form; or if this be insufficient, let a line on the ground be drawn, on either side of which the two players shall stand, and let that one who

allows the shuttlecock to come to the ground on his or her side be condemned to pay a forfeit, of which the nature may be previously determined, and which may vary from an engagement to give the opponent 'what you like,' downwards; or let a cord be stretched across the room, somewhat higher than the heads of the players, and let them keep the shuttlecock up over it, every stroke below being counted as foul, and visited with forfeits. If the amusement is then found to flag, it must be set down to the natural incompatibility of the players, and they had better resign the battledore to more sympathetic hands, and seek for themselves pastimes which can be practised otherwise than *quand on est deux*. Bilboquet, ungracefully and disgracefully known in England as 'cup and ball,' may in such a case be tried, and presents the advantage of enabling the player to make the heaviest bets with himself as to the number of times he can catch the ball on the spike without the necessity of having to pay them; but it may be found to pall upon the taste after a time, as being somewhat monotonous, and, if so, the Princess of Madagascar's egg may be tried. This pastime had its origin in a tragedy which caused the death of a Madagascan princess, who flourished shortly before the Selika introduced to the European public in the 'Africaine.' This young lady, then a simple commoner, had made (as they do in that country, where the males are in a minority) a vow, after the manner of the European paladins,

to prove her devotion to her lover, who was a prince of the blood royal, by performing any task he might impose. Anxious, like all wise young men, to keep his freedom, yet not wishing to discourage the dusky fair one, the young prince prescribed that she must 'catch her breakfast before she ate it.' As the commoners of Madagascar are not allowed by law to eat anything but eggs, she was at first confounded, but, with true woman's wit, she pulled a slender cane from the ground, bent the end of it round, so as to form an oval, slung her eggs at the end of a piece of cord fastened at the middle of the cane, and so throwing them in the air, caught them upon the oval with the greatest dexterity, which so annoyed the prince that he married her, to save his honour, and immediately afterwards cut his own throat. The instrument which the unhappy princess had invented still survives, a monument of true love, and may be made to furnish much amusement, from the variety of different ways in which the egg (which in these days is of course a sham one) may be caught. The triumph of effecting a good catch over the shoulder, followed by a circular catch on the reverse side, is generally considered sufficient to repay hours of fruitless devotion; and to those who share this opinion in any degree the amusement is much to be recommended. Solitaire is another game which may be played alone. For this it is necessary to possess a board, one of which, however, is in the present day to be found in most houses where games are at all in favour. This board is generally indented with thirty-three holes, forming four contiguous squares, and in each of the holes there is a glass ball. One of these is first removed, and the rest taken off one by one by

hopping over each with the ball next to it, an operation which of course presupposes the existence of a vacant hole next beyond for the hopping ball to go into. The ball hopped over is thrown out, and the object is to take all the balls off the board in this way but one, which will be found to be a task infinitely more difficult than it appears. As the fun of the thing consists in finding out how to do it, I give no directions beyond this—that it is perhaps wise to begin by removing the centre ball, and perhaps not. If any young lady is in doubt as to the fidelity of the gentleman who has flirted with her the most assiduously during the last three months, and is yet too bashful to seek an explanation or hear vows from the gentleman himself, let her in solitude resort to 'L'Oracle de la Marguerite,' which consists in picking the petals from off the little white flower so called, repeating, at the same time, 'Mon amant m'aime,' 'un peu,' 'beaucoup,' 'passionément,' 'pas du tout,' plucking a petal at each qualification of the state of her lover's affection, until she comes to the last petal of all, and the word which falls upon that will give her the exact measure of the extent to which she is loved, wherewith I trust she may be so far satisfied as to forbear seeking its confirmation further. In passing, too, I can give a good word to Patience, which has, like the oracle above described, the advantage that it is capable of being played alone. It is, however, a game of such infinite variety that it is useless to do more than mention it, and to say that it is played with packs of small cards called patience cards. There are as many ways of playing it as there are of reading Abracadabra, and those who would study it thoroughly must be referred to the many special works on the subject.

GUESSING PROVERBS.

This is a game suitable to all capacities, and therefore to be recommended to all companies. The party being assembled, one of them leaves the room, and the rest choose a proverb, the words of which must be equal in number to the players who are left. Suppose, for instance, that there are seven persons, and that the proverb chosen is, 'A cat may look at a king,' one word is allotted to each person, and the victim is then introduced. He is allowed to ask any question he pleases of each of the players, and the person addressed must, in making answer, introduce the word which has fallen to his or her share. The object is so to introduce it that it shall not be picked out of the sentence by the victim, and this with some words is a matter of no small difficulty. In the proverb above given, for instance, the first person would have an easy time of it, being only concerned with 'A,' which useful article is capable of being introduced without forcing into almost any answer to any question in the English language. But it is by a judicious management of the easy words that the victim is most readily misled. Perhaps he may ask, 'What is the time by your hat?' Let not the person addressed be content with answering, 'That is a question I cannot answer;' but let the reply be something of this sort, 'I cannot spare time to resolve a mathematical problem;' upon receiving which, the victim will inevitably be caught by the word spare, and will settle in his own mind that the proverb is, 'Spare the rod and spoil the child.' This sort of misleading of malice prepense is ungenerous, perhaps, but quite fair, and makes the thing easier for the second person, who has to introduce the crucial word 'cat.' The victim may perhaps ask, 'Did you ever see

the Pyramids?' when the difficulty of the case will be apparent, and the player who has to answer will be looked upon as lost. The best way then is to treat the questioner as the pearl-fisher does the shark, confuse him by stirring up the mud; and the answer may be, 'Yes; and in the centre of the largest I came across the remains of a *burnt* mummy, surrounded by the emblems of the sacred crocodile, rhinoceros, horse, ostrich, alligator, cat and dog, and white bull, and surmounted by an inscription, stating that Rameses the Six Hundred and Forty-first had died of a *stitch* in his side.' The victim will scarcely make anything out of this, for he will be confounded by the presence of the elements of several common proverbs, and the cat will in all probability escape him, while 'stitch' is very likely to catch his attention. Puns on the words of the proverb are allowable, provided they are quite fair as regards similarity of pronunciation between the words punned upon. If, for instance, the next question asked is, 'How do you like potatoes?' the person addressed may introduce his word by answering, 'I like them well enough from the last day of April to the first of May, baked, but not burnt, and above all, mealy.' Here are some English and French proverbs, the latter being for the benefit of those who choose to play in that best of all languages of society: 'Once bit, twice shy;' 'Never look a gift-horse in the mouth;' 'It is an ill wind that blows nobody good;' 'Least said, soonest mended;' 'Wilful waste makes woful want;' 'A burnt cat dreads the fire;' 'Dis-moi qui tu hantes, je te dirai qui tu es;' 'Qui terre a, guerre a;' 'Péché avoué est à moitié pardonné;' 'Rira bien qui rira le dernier;' 'L'eau va toujours à la rivière;' 'Qui ne sait dissimuler, ne sait régner.'

THE STOOL OF REPENTANCE.

This is usually played thus : One person being sent out of the room, another, who acts as public prosecutor, goes round the circle, and invites each of the company to accuse the absent one of some offence ; the more absurd the imputed crime, the better. This done, the culprit is introduced, and the public prosecutor addresses him. 'It is my painful duty to inform you that in this open and honourable court you have been accused of—' here follows the offence imputed. 'Dyeing your hair'—'Conceit'—'Punctuality'—'Modesty'—'Going to sleep in church'—'Wearing green gloves'—'Flirting'—'Writing poetry'—'Believing in compliments' are all good crimes. Having heard the accusation, the culprit makes a short defence of himself against the charge, and winds up by pointing out the person whom he supposes to have made it, as a proof that no credence can be attached to it. If he guesses right, the accuser is in turn sent out and made to sit on the stool of repentance—if not, the next charge is heard until they are all exhausted. The following appears, however, a better way of playing this game : When the culprit has been selected he should be allowed, before leaving the room, to choose counsel, who leaves the room with him. The company will then elect a judge and counsel for the prosecution ; the crimes will be named, and the prisoner again introduced. The judge, who must assume a becoming gravity and spectacles, and, above all, must sit in an arm-chair, then states the charge that has been made, and calls upon the counsel for the prosecution, who thereupon rises and makes a speech to prove the commission of the imputed crime. When he has come to an end, the

counsel for the prisoner replies, and, in consideration of his ignorance of the accuser, has beside the right to call three witnesses for the defence from among the company. The rule of evidence is that he is not allowed to examine witnesses with regard to the actual commission of the crime, and any approach to an actual reference to it must be stopped by the judge, or objected to by the counsel for the prosecution. His object, therefore, will be so to examine the witnesses with regard to the circumstances attending the crime or the supposed motive for it, as to discover which of the company could have actually seen it or known it to be committed. When this is done, the judge sums up, the matter is referred to the company as a jury, and if the prisoner is acquitted—as he may sometimes be in consideration of a good defence—the accuser takes his place. If, however, he is found guilty, he is asked what he has to say 'why sentence should not be passed upon him?' and he then makes a guess at his accuser. This method gives an opportunity for the display of much oratory and ingenuity on the part of the counsel and witnesses, and may be made productive of great fun.

THE KING'S COMING.

A bustling game, wherein the least amount of intellectual with the greatest amount of bodily activity is required. The players are all seated but one ; that one stands in the centre of the circle and calls out 'Change seats, the king's coming,' upon which every player must change seats with some other, the object of the person who gives the word being to obtain possession of a chair at the moment it is left vacant. This, in consequence of the general confusion, will be found much more difficult than it appears. If, however, the player succeeds in capturing a place, the

person who at the end of all the changing is found to be without a chair takes the place in the centre, and gives in turn the signal for changing. The chief fun of the game consists in the inextricable block which generally occurs in the middle of the circle when the changing takes place. Let me impress upon players the advantage of decision and rapidity, the two qualities which will be found to be chiefly taxed.

QUALIFICATIONS.

In this game the player possessing the most inventive genius writes a story, leaving blank spaces before each noun and proper name which occur in it, and then appeals in turn to each of the company for an adjective until the whole of the spaces are filled up. The tale is then read aloud, and much amusement will probably be derived from the quaint and utterly inapplicable way in which the adjectives come in. For instance, the narrator writes: 'The (metalliferous) Mr. Barkins, walking one (rectangular) day in company with the (calcareous) Bishop of Oxford, met the (straw-coloured) Mrs. Barkins driving in an (empty-headed) barouche, with the (iron-plated) baby, the (kilted) nurse, and the (hypothecated) Queen of Honolulu, whereupon he naturally went to the (dessicated) canal and precipitated his (multifarious) body into the (incongruous) water, which resulted in a most (felicitous) suicide and a (vicarious) verdict of *felo de se*.' The more far-fetched the adjectives the better, since they add the more to the startling nature of the history told.

THE FARRAGO.

This is another form of the same sort of thing, but instead of being written it is done *vivâ voce*, which is so far an advantage. One of the

company is selected to tell a tale, and the rest each choose a trade, such as bootmaker, baker, ironmonger, greengrocer, sailor, silversmith, cheesemonger, &c. The narrator, whenever he requires a noun, appeals to one of the tradesmen, who is bound, under pain of paying forfeit, to furnish one out of the stock-in-trade of his own calling, and those of course come in most incongruously. Thus the narrator begins: 'Sir Ronald the Fearless finding time hang rather heavy on his hands, resolved to go out shooting; and as in those times human life was not held so valuable as it is in these degenerate days, he cared little whether he shot (appeals to greengrocer) cabbages or (appeals to bootmaker) top-boots. In the first place, then, he called his trusty (appeals to sailor) captain's gig, and, the castle being moated, lowered it into the (appeals to butcher) loin of pork, and steered for the (appeals to baker) quartern loaf opposite. He then carefully looked at his (appeals to butcher) ribs, to see that the (appeals to bootmaker) spurs were quite dry, and as the very next moment he chanced to see a (appeals to sailor) forty-gun frigate flying past him at the rate of fifty (appeals to baker) penny rolls an hour, he raised the aforesaid (appeals to butcher) liver and lights, fired at it, hit it, brought it down, and then discovered it to be (appeals to sailor) half a ration of grog, though some said it was (appeals to cheesemonger) Cheshire cheese, while the majority maintained that it was a (appeals to silversmith) dozen forks.' The appeals are made by simply nodding to the person addressed, so as not to interrupt the thread of the story, and the result—as will be seen from the example—is more entertaining than comprehensible.

PROUD MAISIE.

CHAPTER IV.

DAUGHTERS OF EVE.

THREE o'clock on the afternoon of the next day. Eva and I were back in our attic again. I knew they were hourly expecting me at home, but was unwilling to move, and lingered, sitting soberly, idle as usual, with downcast eyes, and looking as I felt, inclined to re-verie and 'divinest melancholy.'

Eva glanced up from her work, laughed, and began to sing maliciously,

'In summer time I saw a face
Trop belle pour moi, hélas, hélas !

'Don't,' I interrupted. 'Eva dearest, when you die, if there be any justice upon earth, you will be deified, and have temples set up to you as the goddess of Industry, with a capital letter.'

Not even a fancy-ball, it appeared, could unsettle her quiet mind for a day. There she sat by her easel, painting at a charming little picture of the nightingale making love to the rose, working away with the same care and interest as usual.

'I often wonder,' I continued plaintively, 'if a ball upsets our partners' heads as it does ours sometimes. But everything unsettles me.'

'You are so impressionable.'

'Yes, and I can't think why.'

'Because you're a genius.'

If Eva had said, 'You're a Jabberwock,' I should have been less taken aback by the observation. 'No, that I'm not,' I promptly retorted; 'I can swear it, by Lavater too.'

'Prove it, then.'

'What colour are my eyes?'

'Brown, of course.'

'And genius, saith Lavater, is always associated with eyes of yellowish green. No, dear, my powerful and original mind has found its own level, I fear, after last night's harlequinade, and found it no higher than it should be. I am costume intoxicated. My brain is a whirl of togas and turbans, casques and cowls, odalisques and zouaves, Watteau shepherdesses and Spanish hidalgos.'

'And Venetian magnificos. What did you talk about with Mr. Gerard?'

'Not much about the weather, nor of the floor, nor anything in the least frivolous. I found his conversation instructive to the highest degree. We got on the subject of his travels, and I listened whilst he took me round the world with him in about a quarter of an hour. But your wits are evidently past being waltzed or gossiped away. At the same time I perceive a want of expression about that nightingale's eye.'

'How you run on, Maisie! Have you been lunching on laughing-gas?'

'No. Day-dreams, dear—angels' food.'

'Food for human beings to starve upon, then. You're not a chameleon nor a bird of paradise, Maisie, to feed upon air. Until you give up dreaming you will never do anything in the world.'

'Very true. You remind me

of Claude prophesying to Ethel, "You will die after eating that green gooseberry." Day-dreams or none, I shall never do anything particular in the world,' said I pathetically; and running off to the piano—that friend in need, that refuge of the destitute which I invariably sought when words failed me to express my feelings—I began to sing an old German *Volkstied*.

‘THE NUN.

I stood on the lofty headland,
Look'd in the deep, deep Rhine;
A boat is sailing yonder;
Three gallants quaff their wine.

The youngest of the gallants,
With eyes so bold and free,
Waves high his Roman goblet:
"Sweetheart, I drink to thee."

"What dost thou thus to pledge me
With glances free and wild?
Thou art a count, and rich born,
And I a peasant's child."

"Ay, wert thou but a wealthier maid,
A twig of a noble tree,
Hadst name and rank to match with
mine,
Faith, would I wed with thee."

"Nor wealth nor rank are mine to own,
Yet honour dear I hold,
And keep till the lover cometh
Who recks not for name or gold."

"And cometh he never, maiden,
How will it fare with thee?"
"Then in the cloister yonder
The bride of Heaven I'll be."

But here, just half-way through my ballad, I suddenly stopped short, with an unmusical shriek, startled at the sight of a figure in the doorway.

Only an old man. I think he had been standing there, unperceived, for a few minutes already, and he was certainly a very strange apparition.

A small spare figure, with a large head, that at first sight gave something grotesque to his presence. The face was nearly half forehead, the eyes large and heavy, with drooping lids; the head, spread with grayish hair too thin

to hide the almost abnormal development of some organs, was a phrenological curiosity. The features were small and fine, and wore an almost feminine expression of sensitiveness and delicacy, backed, however, by an abundance of nervous masculine force, and a most unfeminine self-reliance.

'Pardon, meess,' said he to Eva, speaking with the strongest German accent imaginable, and darting a wrathful sidelong glance at me, affronted, it seemed, at having been mistaken for a goblin. 'The purpose of my visit is not to alarm. But I have a *Jodge* for the English Opera next Monday, and thought that perhaps you, meess, and Mr. your uncle, might desire to assist at the *début* of your friend and countryman, Theodore Marston.'

'What, *Masaniello*?' I exclaimed hastily.

He turned to me severely.

'No, meess; it is as Max in *Der Freischütz*;' and almost before Eva could notify her acceptance or express her thanks he had made his bow and exit.

'In the name of all that's wonderful,' I asked, impressed, 'who is that—man, I was going to say, but he looks more like an electric machine?'

Eva laughed and explained. Her visitor was Herr von Zbirow, a German composer and pianist of some eminence, now on his first visit to England; a gentleman of eccentric habits and habitations, who had lodgings in a lower story of the house, but had been absent for the last two months on a provincial tour.

I listened with interest. I had heard much of Von Zbirow. Who had not? For he was a genius; his worst enemies must grant him that, though they squared accounts by accusing him of

wresting it to his own condemnation. A prophet he might be, but a prophet of Baal.

Eva related how, between him and herself, a peculiar kind of second-hand friendship had arisen. Von Zbirow professed to speak no English, Eva no other language; and they had never met before, except on the stairs. But one day in the spring the landlord's boy came to her with a message from the lodger on the second floor. The gentleman had two small tame owls, which he always carried about with him, to whom he was affectionately attached. The young lady's peculiar talents had been made known to him. Would she oblige him by painting his pets? Of course the young lady consented. Messages were interchanged through the medium of the landlord's boy, with whom the musician had learnt to communicate by signs. Von Zbirow always bowed graciously to Eva now when he met her; but this was the first time he had tried to penetrate into her sanctum.

'It must have been your music that brought him to-day,' she observed.

'Yes, in hopes of putting a stop to it,' I retorted, laughing; 'but that he sha'n't.'

And forthwith I took up the thread of my ballad again where I had dropped it.

'That night, well-nigh half the night through,

The count slept sad and sore;
He dreamt his love, his heart's delight,
Had pass'd the cloister door.

"Now up and rouse thee, my henchman true,

Haste hither to my side;
A horse for thee and me—this night
To the cloister we must ride."

And when they came to the cloister,

They knock at the convent gate:
"Bring forth the nun, the youngest
That hither came last and late."

Forth came the maiden slowly,
A snow-white robe she wore;
Gone are the long, long tresses—
"Farewell, for evermore."

The count's heart sinks into silence;
He leans upon a stone;
From his eyes the tears are falling,
From his heart all joy is gone.

She bade him then to pledge her,
To pledge her in his glass:
The glass lies shatter'd and broken—
Broken his heart, alas!

There with her own pale fingers
She dug the count a grave;
On the sod the holy water
From her dark-brown eyes she gave.

With her sweet voice she chanted
Over the grave his knell;
With her fair lips she sounded
The count's last funeral bell.'

'Maisie, you sing better than anybody I ever heard,' said Eva, in her grave way.

'It runs in the family, dear. Claude is already a distinguished amateur on the flute, and Ethel is going to learn the violoncello. You may expect one of these days to hear of the "talented Noel family, in their popular musical entertainment." Talking of whom, I suppose I must go home to them.'

As I left the room I encountered Von Zbirow on the stairs. He shot a look at me which made me stop suddenly, involuntarily, for a moment, as I imagined he was going to speak. He did not, however; and I went on with the little irritated feeling of one who has perpetrated a *gaucherie*. In a few minutes I was in the drawing-room at home, giving a graphic account of the ball to my mother and the twins.

My mother was one of those not uncommon characters which strike us at the same time as a protest against and an apology for the 'subjection of women' as it exists, or existed at least in the last generation. It was grievous, no doubt, to see an intelli-

gent being, in full possession of the ordinary faculties, so ill-trained in their independent exertion as to have lost all the higher use of them, like a prisoner who, kept too long cooped up, loses the full use of his limbs. On the other hand, the most modest and disinterested male that ever stood up for the rights of women might be forgiven for doubting whether, under any conceivable circumstances, Mrs. Noel could have been his intellectual equal at the bar, the desk, in business, the lecture-room, the pulpit, or anywhere else.

Nothing was fixed in her but an amiable shiftiness; nothing determined but indetermination. Weakness of mind seems to claim a certain deference and respect, like weakness of muscle. Not an opinion, not a principle, not a belief of hers but must have fallen helplessly before the first assailant; so people in general chivalrously refrained from assailing them and making her uncomfortable. She had made a love-match in her marriage, against the will of her family, with my father—a clever, handsome, ‘feckless’ young man, remembered by his friends and contemporaries as the greatest intellectual spendthrift of their circle; a man whose wit and powers were at every one’s service but his own; who frittered away talents and golden opportunities by the score; took a serious fit, orders, and a wife in the space of a few months, and spent his energies for the remainder of his life in a struggle, sad in itself, with poverty, ill-health, and overwork, but gilded by natural high spirits and a sanguine disposition. My mother’s marriage was the first and last independent act of her life; but even that had been a yielding to an outer force—the wilful urgency

of her lover, stronger than the mild obstinacy of her parents. She made him a perfect wife to his idea. She acquiesced in everything, fostered his whims, or besetting sins as sterner folks called them, believed in his wildest hopes, applauded his most luckless plans, and wheeled round with his veering mind as a weathercock shifts with the wind. It was no doubt a very foolish *ménage*, and yet she said—and my early recollections said the same—they did contrive to live very happily for years under trying circumstances that would have thoroughly soured or driven to despair many a better and wiser couple.

He died, and she was inconsolable. But her mind was as incapable of retaining grief as any other impression for very long. Besides, other cares would intrude; and the present with her was always despotic. During my father’s lifetime she had neglected us, her children, for him. Now care for the olive-branches had long almost obliterated the past from her memory, entirely from her heart. She was pretty still, like a portrait faded in colour and tone, but intact in the outline, and still took as profound an interest in the mysteries of a ball as any girl in her teens.

My reappearance had been the signal for a storm of questions from her and the twins. I plunged at once into my recital. It was strictly true as far as it went, though cut and revised as I thought fit for family comment. I talked a good deal about Theodore Marston, and was much bantered in consequence by the precocious Ethel. Somehow Jasper Gerard’s name was never mentioned once.

‘Imagine a room, not large, but a very Aladdin’s palace for bril-

liancy, flowers everywhere instead of gems, sparkling with light and colour; imagine the most exquisite decorations of roses and ferns, delicious music, dresses indescribable, but *all* gorgeous and blazing with half the family jewels in London.'

'And Maisie in the middle of it all,' said Claude compassionately; 'poor thing! How mean and tawdry you must have felt in all your theatrical trumpery!'

'How perfectly correct and artistic, you mean,' I retorted. 'Why yes, there were others there who called themselves gipsies, in white-kid gloves; and peasantesses wearing a hundred pounds' worth of rings on their fingers, for fear, I suppose, lest they should be mistaken for anything so vulgar as their originals.'

'Did you get good partners?' asked Ethel.

'I never wish for a better than Theodore Marston; he dances divinely.'

'You've certainly lost your heart to him, Maisie. For shame; an actor!'

'Not quite so bad as that,' put in Claude. 'He *was* a gentleman, it seems, at least till he went on the stage. They're a very good set of fellows at the Treasurer's Office, I'm told. Shouldn't mind entering it myself.'

'Perhaps the Treasury would have you,' I replied witheringly; 'but as for the stage, it would decline you with thanks, I'll answer for that.'

'O, if a man has a really beautiful voice and likes the vagabond kind of life, I don't know why he should not go in for it,' said Claude magnanimously; 'but of course he must take the consequences in society.'

'And it looks rather as if he was no good for anything better,' said Ethel; 'doesn't it, mamma?'

'Yes, dear. Still it is always best in the end to let people follow their own vocation as it is pointed out by their natural gifts.'

'Now look here, mamma,' quoth Claude, 'you know that I have a natural gift for standing on my head and that sort of thing. Would you let me follow my vocation and go in for being a street tumbler?'

Before she could reply I interposed hastily,

'Hush! there's a carriage at the door.'

Ethel rushed to the window. 'Why, it's—it's—it's Hilda Jarvis, Maisie, and you've got your old brown gown on!'

Too true. Despondingly I looked in the glass, and saw 'the day after the revels' all too plainly written there in a dusty, *chiffonné*, hopelessly demoralised something about my reflection. My eyes and colour were unusually bright, but with regard to the dress there could not be two opinions.

'It's lucky I'm averagely respectable,' said Ethel, arranging her gold-green skirts.

I darted out of the room, and presently sailed in again, having added a rose-coloured sash and bows to my toilet with such effect as to confound the twins. The robin had put on its red breast.

It mattered not, however. The visitor's apparel, which Ethel was already pondering in her heart, was of that provoking description which makes any other, old or new, look shabby beside it; such a specimen of perishable nineteenth-century work as might well drive a modern reformer to break out with the very words of Chaucer's honest parson in righteous indignation against 'the superfluity of clothing, which that maked is so dear, to the harm of the people, not only the cost of embroidering, the disguising, in-

denting, or barring, and semblable waste of cloth in vanity, costly furring in the gowns; so much pouncing of chisels to make holes, so much dagging of shears and superfluity of length in the afore-said gowns.'

The wearer embraced me with effusion. Hilda Jarvis was the eldest daughter of a baronet, for twenty years sinecurist on the Civil List at several thousands a year, highly connected, and with a peerage in prospect. She was young, handsome, accounted clever, the hopeful child of fashion and fashionable parents. Her mother and my father had been friends in youth, and we girls whilst in the schoolroom had for years regularly gone to tea with each other every Saturday afternoon. Thus we grew up nominal friends; familiar, but never intimate. We were really irreconcilables born and bred, though I was but just beginning to be aware of the fact.

'I feel so ashamed of myself, Maisie, for never having been to see you before,' she began, but in a tone as though she were boasting of it. 'I had to go to an afternoon rout to-day, and finding myself up in your neighbourhood thought I would come and pay my long-promised visit, whilst the carriage goes back to fetch mamma from Lady Meredith's, where I left her.'

'Lady Meredith? I repeated.

'Yes. O my dear, she has a fancy dress on view to-day—only to the elect of course—but I was one of the privileged few, and I think the sight will haunt me with jealousy for a week. Such a delightful thing; she wore it last night at a fancy-ball, where I would have given the world to have been. How shall I describe that costume to you?'

'Let me try. Pomegranate-co-

loured dress, open over an embroidered muslin bodice, and with an over-skirt of white gauze; wide silk trousers and richly-worked morocco-slippers; small blue-velvet cap embroidered with gold, and pomegranate flowers in the hair,' I rattled off quickly.

'What! even you have heard of it already?'

'Seen it, Hilda, and herself in it, the cynosure of a crowd.'

'Maisie, how absurd you are! Do you mean to say you were actually at the ball?'

'That I was;' and I felt a momentary mean triumph.

The twins looked quite proud of their sister; for had not Hilda committed herself to stating that she would have given the world to have been there?

'Ah,' in another tone, 'I heard there was an immense crush. Tell me, was it not rather a mixed affair?'

'I cannot say; I knew so few. Some friends took me.'

'What kind of a place is the Priory?'

'A very curious place; old and picturesque, and full of artistic backgrounds.'

'And the owner?'

'Mr. Gerard?'

'Yes. I have heard a great deal about him that makes me curious. They say that he is so very good-looking and clever, but rather odd and intractable. He's a great "catch," do you know?'

'Mr. Gerard is a tall young gentleman, with blue eyes, upright carriage, gentlemanly manners, dark wavy hair, moustache and beard to match, and a pale complexion. Any young lady who shall succeed in apprehending the same shall receive an adequate reward, did you say, in settlements?'

She laughed.

'Well, he is hardly rich as things go. What is ten thousand

a year nowadays? Lady Meredith would run through it all in no time. Her husband has double; but then he is paralytic. They say Mr. Gerard is in love with her, and that is how the ball came about. A friend brought her this dress from Greece; she wanted to wear it, and teased him and his mother into giving the party. Did you notice anything of it?

'He did take her in to supper,' I replied warily, 'and seemed quite annoyed afterwards when Mr. Marston carried her off.'

Hilda put me well to the question about Jasper Gerard. She was so much more acute than the twins that I had to take refuge under the safe shield of apparent obtuseness. Could not say if he was good-looking; he was in disguise. He might be clever; but what man can be witty at a ball? Had not observed that he was particularly attentive to any one. Hilda, seeing that it was useless to attempt to get anything further out of the impenetrable stupidity of her witness, rose to depart the instant her carriage was announced. As she went towards the door, her eye fell on Eva's little picture of Jock that hung on the wall.

'That's pretty, Maisie. Did you do it yourself?'

'No; a friend of mine. She is an artist—a bird and flower painter.'

'Professional?'

'Certainly.'

'Is she dear?' continued Hilda, who, with some hundreds a year pocket-money, liked to make a virtue of economy.

'Not particularly; but why?'

'Because I've been wishing for a long while to have my parrot's portrait taken; and if she isn't too ruinous she shall do my Poll. I think he's going to die soon, and I want him to be painted first. Good-bye, dear; be sure you come to see me soon.'

And off she went. Claude began to read the *Times*; Ethel and my mother to devise ways and means for a possible cheap imitation of Hilda's rococo gown. As for me, I was wishing, rather rudely, that she had never come. For Hilda, her gown, and her conversation had jarred upon me to that degree that all the divinity was gone from my day's mood past recovery.

CHAPTER V.

MAX.

THE performance of the *Frei-schütz*, in which Theodore Marston was to make his first appearance before the British public, was given by an 'English' Opera company, of which the principals consisted of three Germans, two Americans, two Italians, and a Swede. This international troupe had for a month or two been playing at one of the leading theatres, with but very limited success. It was confidently hoped, however, that Theodore Marston might prove the making of them yet; an attraction that should retrieve their fortunes, raise their prestige, and tide them over the remainder of the season. As had been expected, his *début* was the fashionable artistic event of the night. For a young man with ecclesiastical connections in high places, and who has scandalised the county town to which his family belonged, by throwing up a certain position and a good appointment in the Civil Service to go on the stage, may still prove a nine days' wonder in London society. Reports from Italy spoke highly of Theodore Marston's B flats, which, before this, had certainly electrified London drawing-rooms. They were now to electrify

London amphitheatres—a very different thing.

That I was to accompany Eva and her uncle to the Opera on the night in question had been settled as a matter of course; and in due time they called to carry me off, Mr. Severn gallantly presenting me with a full-blown white rose, the glory of his garden, which I stuck in my dress accordingly.

The overture was beginning as we entered. Ours was a little box, not far from the stage. Mr. Severn leaned out to reconnoitre, and announced that the house was full.

‘And with an uncommonly fashionable-looking audience,’ he added. ‘Our friend Theodore’s in luck. All the world seems to be here to-night, and his wife.’

‘And daughters,’ I added, suddenly catching sight of the Jarvises in a box opposite.

A perfect family group. Sir John, the heavy father—and a very heavy father too; Lady Jarvis, strong in diamonds and moire antique; and Hilda, a sweet young thing, in virgin white and unsophisticated wild roses, with as many lovers around her as Penelope, and showing no less skill in keeping them at bay.

‘Maisie,’ whispered Eva, ‘guess whom I see in the stalls.’

‘Mephistopheles, surely,’ said I, ‘you look so mysterious.’

‘Not exactly. See for yourself; just underneath, in the first row.’

I looked down, and saw the head of dark wavy hair I had so accurately described to Hilda. Mr. Gerard was studying the libretto; but no sooner did my eyes fall upon the crown of his head than he quickly, involuntarily as it were, looked up, straight into our box.

‘Young Gerard, I declare!’ said Mr. Severn. ‘I suppose he’s

an *habitué* here. But of course he has come to see his friend’s success.’

‘Or to be “in at the death,” as some one suggested!’ remarked Eva. ‘I heard that there was a clique against him.’

‘Against Mr. Marston?’ I exclaimed indignantly.

‘Yes; partly a little professional jealousy—they can’t forgive or forget the amateur all at once—and partly some private theatrical quarrel. Quite enough to make his friends anxious.’

‘O, nonsense,’ said Mr. Severn hopefully. ‘If there’s an opposition Theodore will soon sing it down,’ much as he might have talked of walking off a cold.

‘Hush!’ said Eva solemnly, as the curtain drew up; and we hushed and extended our necks unanimously.

It was a small company, and the scene disclosed a muster of about a dozen Bohemian peasants and as many peasantesses singing, in chorus, their laughing jeering ditty to Max, the unsuccessful marksman, who is seated apart, his head sunk in his hands.

Suddenly he looked up, rose, and walked forwards.

Nature assuredly had cast Theodore Marston for the part of a forester or a franc-tireur in the Schwarzwald or Tyrol. It was a most whimsical fortune that had set him down, like a foundling, first in the well-regulated medium of English country society, and afterwards at a desk in an office. Like many other stage-struck persons, he had probably been drawn to the boards less by pure dramatic instinct than by the restlessness of a being somehow hopelessly parted from his natural calling.

The nearest approach to satisfaction, the best opportunity for the development and exercise of

his wayward qualities, he would find on the stage, where at least he might *act* his own character at times, and give play to humours and impulses that found no outlet in polite, ultra-civilised, modern life.

His appearance, at all events, was a success. Of middle height, well, compact, powerfully built as a young faun; a figure with an Italian suppleness in all its movements; a downright handsome countenance, good forehead, shaded by layers of short curly brown hair, and beneath, those bold, bright, dark, southern, unprincipled eyes. The chorus, as they mocked at him, looked like a pack of silly children teasing some dangerous young wild animal, that at any moment might break loose, startle, and put them all to flight.

A nature with power in it enough and to spare. Physical power, not excessive as in the prize giant or athlete, where an abnormal artificial muscular development so encroaches on the intellect and heart as to reduce them to brutality or insignificance, but a well-distributed activity and nerve. Power to will, hope, dare, act, live, enjoy—in short, an intense personality. The very nature flatly to rebel against the monotonous fret of the commonplace, the rules and measures of society.

But now Max is going to sing, and many tremble for the amateur, the amateur turned professional, prepared by experience for the worst; that is, for some painful exhibition of weakness.

But one and all were taken aback. With an excellent voice, both telling and robust, Theodore Marston was, above all, a dramatic singer. He had that instinct of appropriate expression which half makes up for shortcomings in

finish and execution, and another invaluable gift besides—the art so hard to acquire, but sometimes inborn, of concentrating the attention of the audience upon himself; in theatrical slang, of ‘pulling the house together.’

Max the Freischütz is, as everybody knows, an insufferable nincompoop, even for a tenor; a feeble desponding soul, and a very bad shot into the bargain; always crying over spilt milk, and refusing to do what he begins to set about the very next instant. He has not the spirit openly to defy Fortune. When fair means fail him to secure his prize he falls in with the first suggestion of foul, and no sooner does he find out that he has disgraced himself to no purpose than he cries ‘Peccavi’ again. Could there be a more despicable hero? A coward both in virtue and vice.

But our Max to-night is a youth all fire and fury, *bon enfant* in the main, but just now under the sway of an imperious desire. Agatha he loves; Agatha, at all hazards, he must win. For her sake he is ready to dare all the fiends in Tophet; how much more the bats and spiders in the Wolf’s Glen, whither he has to go to forge the magic bullets which insure him victory?

And so on throughout the whole scene in the haunted gorge. His horror, sufficiently well acted as it was to make the old ladies shrink in the stalls, seemed to be overridden by the reckless daring of a wild spirit who half enjoys the unearthly scene, and the challenge he is casting at Fate.

‘More like the prince of demons than their prey,’ I exclaimed, as the curtain fell, turning eagerly round to Eva.

But instead I encountered the face of Mr. Gerard, who, unper-

ceived by me, had this instant come into our box.

He took a seat behind me with a smile at my ardour.

'The fireworks went off very well, did they not?' said he.

'Do you mean the owls and ghosts in the Wolf's Glen?'

'Yes. Quite the most ridiculous bit of spectral claptrap on the stage.'

I sighed.

'Mine is such an obliging sort of imagination. It makes no more objection to glorifying theatrical tricks than Shakespeare's audience had in supplying fancystreets, crowds, armies, and battles when required.'

'Then am I to suppose that in the last act you saw real and terrible birds of prey, real monsters, real fiends?'

'Of course I did. And you—you only saw rubbish; wire toys, like scarecrows, and mumming boys with masks and long tails, capering awkwardly about.'

'You have the advantage of me.'

'I feel that I have.'

'And can your lively imagination work miracles upon our Agatha to-night' (Agatha was an elderly young lady of some forty summers, fair, but distressingly fat)—'beautify her into "the loveliest peasant girl in Bohemia"?'

I laughed. 'Even my fancy must draw the line somewhere. But I think I have not been paying much attention to Agatha.'

'Ah, how stupid of me! Max has it all, naturally. What do you think of him?'

'I don't think he is a great artist,' said I sagely; for when Mr. Gerard asked a question he seemed to claim something beyond a mere conventional reply.

'What do you mean?'

'Not yet. He does not lose himself in his part; I do not think

he could. He tries instead to identify his part with him. He takes hold of some one point in it that reflects some quality of his own, brings that out, puts that first and the rest nowhere, and so gives us a one-sided impersonation. The impersonation is so striking as almost to make one forget the liberties he has taken with his rôle, but he has transformed it. So much for my opinion' (I had taken great pains to express my idea); 'now for yours.'

'What can a man add to such an elaborate criticism?'

'Say something, do,' I entreated impatiently, whilst Eva and Mr. Severn listened impressed.

'Well, I'll be practical, and say to my mind he's a failure.'

'O, why? I pleaded; 'he has talent surely, and ought to succeed.'

'Talent is only the first step to success, not the ladder,' returned Mr. Gerard philosophically. 'You can't make a plum-pudding without plums certainly, but neither out of all the plums in storedom can you make a plum-pudding. I don't deny this man has good points, but he wants—' and he stopped.

'What?' I asked inquisitively. A man's opinion of a man is always worth having to a woman, if only as a curiosity. It is sure to be so far and wide of her own.

'Refinement.'

Eva exclaimed and defended him vigorously. I held my tongue; I felt Mr. Gerard had hit a blot. It was not so much refinement, though, as tenderness and elevation that Theodore Marston lacked. I acknowledged to myself suddenly that, with all his passionate ardour, he was crude and hard, and made but a second-best lover.

'But I don't suppose the audience will mind that,' pursued the critic.

I said that I hoped they would be more merciful; and as I spoke a terrible vision arose before me of having to sing to an audience composed of Mr. Gerards!

The third act began, and he returned to his post in the stalls. During our conversation I had observed Hilda opposite, bestowing on us a most flattering amount of attention. For Miss Jarvis the performance went on during the 'waits,' and then only. The opera itself was an interlude. She had frankly confessed to me that she regarded it, as she regarded most things—croquet, riding, art exhibitions, even church—merely as an excuse for bringing people together. You might as reasonably talk of the co-relation of the physical sciences to your horse as of pure musical enjoyment to her. The nearest approach she knew was the thrill excited by the strain of some familiar waltz striking her ears—strains associated with first ballroom triumphs; and the art of Madame Elise was the only one for which she had ever felt spontaneous enthusiasm.

Max, now that the demons have been routed, is himself again, and reappears in his original mood, naïf, impulsive, self-willed, and soft-hearted, and so remains throughout all the final vicissitudes, till his ordeal and the opera end at last, he and Agatha join hands, and the curtain falls.

Flat as it is, the act had a germ of life infused into it that evening. Theodore Marston was the hero of the hour, and at the close was greeted by applause we thought tremendous. A special call for Max followed. When he appeared a few bouquets fell, thrown by some obscure female admirer, but

they looked worthless and foolish; he had deserved better.

'If only we had one,' sighed Eva; 'your rose, Maisie.'

In a moment of operatic enthusiasm I flung it on the stage—at the stage rather; for flung awkwardly by an inexperienced hand it fluttered feebly through the air, and tumbled—at Mr. Gerard's feet instead of at those of Max.

In the confusion no one but myself, I fancied, had noticed the incident. Looking down the next moment I saw that both rose and man had disappeared.

He came out to meet us in the lobby, still holding the luckless flower.

'Isn't this some of your property,' said he, 'that has lost its way?'

I laughed, not knowing what to say.

'What?' he resumed playfully; 'perhaps then it was *not* intended for him after all, but—'

'It *was* intended for him, and he had earned it fairly by hard work,' I replied obstinately.

'And I've done nothing to deserve it; only I've got it, and shall keep it.'

'Keep it, keep it, Mr. Gerard. Give it an honourable place in your collection.'

'My collection?'

'I thought every gentleman kept a collection of—what shall I say? locks of hair, bits of tarten, artificial flowers, and bows, all carefully sorted and labelled, sacred to the memory of this dear departed ball or that masquerade.'

'You don't suspect me of such superstitious practices, I hope and trust,' he said, with emphasis.

The next moment Hilda Jarvis came up to speak to me. I felt convinced she wanted to attract Mr. Gerard's attention, as he beyond all question had attracted hers. She was most becomingly

dressed, but all her subtle manoeuvres were in vain. Mr. Gerard was looking the other way, and she could not even make him see her. She decided that he must be stupid, but it followed not. There are men, and wide awake enough, who can only think of one thing at a time.

CHAPTER VI.

RED-LETTER DAYS.

THE next morning, waking from some runaway dream of delight, I awoke to a strange novel sense of happiness for a moment, as if some magic blessing had fallen on me from the stars as I slept, and I was to find all the gifts of Fortunateus heaped up by my bedside.

They come, those sudden spirit revolutions, and shake one's faith in one's own character. I, who clung piously to my identity, could not give up my old self without a struggle. So I began to reason, to ask why, to look back, trying to set my mind's house in order, and to find out the missing link between the *ego* of to-day and the *ego* of heretofore.

Here was I in the world: that was a first principle, an established fact, something to start from.

But what in the world for? How often had I asked myself that question, demurring indigantly of course at the respectable traditional solution that woman's sphere is that of a satellite, her business to dance attendance on man as his helpmeet. The first chapters of Genesis are still made use of to back up certain theories about the relations of men and women, husbands and wives, by the same people who otherwise discard their contents altogether, and at these inconsistencies I laughed as they deserved. If

sometimes I fell in with not so much the first chapters of Genesis as the spirit of poetry and romance, which is like oxygen to our young mental life, so far as to regard love, and marriage its outcome, as the cardinal points of destiny, never did a girl take less thought for them than I. Like birth or death, I supposed they would come, if they were to come, without asking my consent. But not even their shadow had hitherto arisen to vary the monotony of this mental vegetation.

My friends of my own age, such as Hilda Jarvis, found a tempting field for the exercise of their faculties in the general female scramble for power over man, three times as fiercely fought out in Vanity Fair as on emancipation platforms. I could not blame or despise Hilda and company for scheming for husbands: it might be a necessary feature in the struggle for existence; it was certainly the single natural outlet provided by their education and surroundings for any talent or ambition with which they might happen to be encumbered. It might be eccentricity on my part which had made me prefer not to interfere with the course of social evolution on that point, and really find more pleasure and interest in my favourite musical studies and the interchange of ideas with Eva in our attic than in the increase of partners at balls, and the determination of the largest number of empty-headed young men to my side after a dinner-party.

"I ought to be a 'social failure,'" I said to myself again and again, though feeling all the same secretly right glad that there were no signs of that just at present. The worst was that to succeed I had always to be acting a part, a part of which I foresaw that I should not take long to tire. Often al-

ready, after an evening spent in chattering nonsense to young officers, waltzing and quadrilling with collegians, discussing the weather and the parks, servants and pet animals, with dowagers, myself one of a pack of 'unidea'd girls,' how often when it was over I seemed to throw aside a mask, and ask myself if this was all youth and pleasure had to offer—and if with some people, born in polite but frigid circles, the tedium of routine might not lead on to some desperate step—who knows what? Theodore Marston had asked himself this, and answered in the affirmative. He had felt his wings and flown. But then he was a man. '*La carrière ouverte aux talents*' is as yet but half acknowledged as a rule extending to womankind, and he who proclaimed the maxim to the world had a very opposite law for us.

Society, I decided, was not enough to satisfy this fretting energy. It does well as an extra, like pastry after dinner; but one cannot live upon fritters. Men, even cornets and collegians, have it cornered them as dessert. To a young lady it often makes up the bill of fare of existence. My 'home duties' were now an unpaid sinecure. The twins had their governess. To my mother I was useful as an excuse for going into society, which she loved; but why should society-lovers need an excuse for following their bent?

I was free, but it was a barren freedom after all. I might practise from morning till night if I pleased, improve myself till I was worth taking out a patent for. But 'to what purpose is this waste?' was the question that too often suggested itself—waste, as it seemed to me, of trouble and energy. What, indeed, beyond the selfish one of amusement?

The 'perfection of the individual' was a motive as yet too far out of my reach for me to give it a thought. For that one must be forty or a Goethe. Thus I had gone on 'cultivating my mind' quite purposelessly, but convinced that there is, or ought to be, something else for women to look forward to in this present world beyond adding to an already too numerous population, and in the mean time to be well dressed, able to talk a little, to sing a little, if in tune preferred, and to write notes of invitation in a lady-like hand. Such a life, to nine out of ten, would be simply and absolutely intolerable but for the vague illusory hopes that buoy up youth throughout its melancholy.

Are they illusory always? That Fata Morgana it had never before been mine to approach, had it come and touched me? That prize in the lottery of life which lies somewhere in the wheel, and may turn out to be ours, was it nearing me now, in the form of Love, the king, the reconciler between woman and her wrongs, or her sphere, which ever it may be, having come thus without herald or warning?

The proof? That I felt more interested in a man I had only seen twice than I had ever been with any one else in my life. The reason? I could give none, but that flash of feeling that came like a revelation, a sudden strange *entente* that passeth all psychology; a perception that, though Jasper Gerard was a man who had seen the world inside and out, I a girl who had never been out of leading-strings, our souls had somehow been travelling the same road, taking the same impressions, forming the same opinions, retaining the same associations, harmonising—though at a distance—and strangers.

Away with philosophy; away, also, with silly school-girls' sentimental speculations. I shook off the dreams that hovered about me, and to distract myself practised solfeggi as diligently as a student preparing for an examination.

A week went by. It was a sultry summer's evening. My mother had taken the twins to a children's tea-party. Towards six o'clock I bethought me of going over to Eva's for an hour. I had a present to take her of some fruit that had been sent us from the country, and knew I should find her at her easel as long as the daylight lasted.

It was one of those extraordinarily hot days that play fast and loose with London etiquette. Whalebone itself would melt away in the sun. Brave Bengal tigers walk down Bond-street in white apparel, and no one can even laugh at them. Men go about gasping, hat in hand; others with linen on the nape of their necks. Ladies and their toilettes are generally limp. The demoralisation is complete, and nothing but a thunderstorm will cure it.

Eva's landlord, an Englishman, had actually left his castle or house door open. I ran up-stairs, and walked coolly, in every sense but one, into our attic, singing. 'Cherry ripe, cherry ripe, cherry ripe,' I cried, as I entered. Fresh and pleasant beyond description was that little retreat of ours, redolent with verbena and mignonette. Eva stood there among her birdcages, feeding a paroquet and looking unusually demure. But the light was dim, and not till I got to the middle of the room did I perceive that we had a visitor, and that our one chair—it was of carved oak and said to have belonged to Lady Jane Grey—was occupied by Jasper Gerard. A provokingly weather-

proof person he; unexceptionably dressed as usual, cool, comfortable, and serene. All at once I became conscious of my hopelessly Bohemian appearance that day, in the height of the season too, and here in the fashionable western district; no attempt at an elaborate toilette—trailing tumbled white dress, tangled hair, my yellow-straw hat and blue ribbons hanging behind me, and a basket of cherries and nectarines in my hand.

I walked up to Mr. Gerard valiantly, offering him my wares as gracefully as was possible under the circumstances.

'Will you buy, will you buy? They are really very fine nectarines, sir,' I added, in mock apology, 'and don't come off a stall.'

He laughed, and offered to shake hands; but I declined, and showed my palm.

'Couldn't. Look at that. It is worse than Lady Macbeth's—"not all the perfumes of Araby," you know—'

'Try a good scrub with Windsor soap,' said he, possessing himself of the hand, cherry-stains notwithstanding.

Then I took down our precious cracked Chelsea plate, worth its weight in gold in our eyes, and offered it to him with some fruit. He seemed amused, and accepted with a good grace.

'Have you any news of the hero of the other night?' I asked, as we began the feast. 'Is Mr. Marston content with his reception?'

'Quite the reverse. Never trust a "first night." I saw him this afternoon, poor fellow. We may tell him any judgment of charity fibs we please, but the whole thing is a failure. He is so badly supported, and has not yet a great name that could fill the theatre by itself. The

manager is out of pocket, and will close the season shortly, I imagine. As for Theodore, he goes abroad soon, to Germany, where he has patrons and professional interest. By the way, the tiresome fellow wants an opera libretto for some composer he won't name, some friend of his, to set to music; and he bothered me about it till, in an unguarded moment, I promised to write him one.'

'An opera libretto!' I exclaimed, interested; 'and on what?'

'On the Disestablishment of the Church, for all I can tell you now,' he retorted, laughing. 'I have not even begun to think about it yet, and they say besides that it takes a lot of reading to get an original idea.'

'Must it be original?' I said suddenly.

'Why do you ask?'

It was only that an old story had occurred to me; a story, I told him, so old that it was quite as good as original, and which I thought might do.

'Really,' said he incredulously; 'then I shall be much obliged if you will make me a present of it at once—tell it me, at least.'

'Now—this minute?'

'This very minute as ever is.'

'I don't know,' said I, hesitating, aghast at the trap into which I had walked. 'It is old-fashioned, and so romantic it ought to be sung, not said.'

'No matter,' he urged; 'sing it, if you please; only begin.'

'It is a tragedy, I warn you.'

'Never mind; I like to be harrowed. Go on.'

The light is fading rapidly, I cannot see my audience very clearly, or whether they laugh at me; the convolvulus flowers and the birds have gone to sleep. From the regions below come the inspiring sounds of some fantasy pieces of Schumann's; Herr von

Zbirow is playing his very best for his own benefit. All this is in my favour. I clear my throat and begin.

'Count Dario had an only daughter. She was beautiful Perdita, an Italian girl-beauty, with black hair and passionate eyes, far too lovely for life to be easy to her. A mysterious shadow had clouded her youth. At her birth her father, who was deeply superstitious, had had her horoscope cast by a famous astrologer. The prophecy then uttered, that she was threatened in love with a fatal peril that should overtake her before she reached her twenty-first year, haunted the Count night and day. It induced him to bring her up in the strictest seclusion. As the time drew nearer, tormented by vague fears for her safety, he barely allowed her to stir from the precincts of the castle where they lived.

'It stood upon an island in a lake, so precaution was easy. But in spite of all he could do, Rafael, the "young prince" of the story, a stranger in the neighbourhood, had contrived more than once to see Perdita walking in the gardens, she him in his boat on the lake. Glances were interchanged, and hearts of course. They found means to communicate secretly, and at last he persuaded her to consent to fly with him from her present captivity. He would contrive the means of escape. The plan succeeded, Rafael carrying her off by night to a castle of his own in a forest not far distant.'

'So far, so good,' said Mr. Gerard, nodding approvingly. 'That might be worked up into a first act perhaps. I like your story, Miss Noel. Pray go on.'

'A little while, and the sunshine is at an end. News came to Rafael from his mother at Florence—news of her illness, with

a summons to her bedside. He felt he must obey, though doubly loth, for reasons of which Perdita knew nothing, and which he dared not betray, to return to his home. He broke the fact of his enforced journey to her; and overwhelming her with vows and protestations of everlasting faith and affection and so on, he departed, leaving her in the lonely castle.

'But Perdita was haunted by a strong foreboding of evil, a sharp mistrust, which forbade her to rest or to wait in patience and hope. She followed him by stealth in boy's disguise, taking a pilgrim's dress, and transforming herself so successfully that her lover, when she overtook him, could not recognise her. Rafael accosted the young stranger, and was taken with such a singular fancy for him that he engaged him to enter his service as page. When questioned by his master as to whence he came, the boy would only reply with a song :

"Vengo da parte addove sempre 'ne pianto
Stace una donna e dice, 'O bianco viso,
Deh chi me t' ha levato da lo canto?" "

'The words and air had an extraordinary fascination for Rafael. They brought back Perdita to his mind, and again and again, as he journeyed on, he would oblige his young minstrel to repeat the strain. At last they reached Florence, and the palace where Rafael's mother held her little court. She was not ill, and frankly avowed to him that her message was only a stratagem to bring him back to herside.

'For Rafael, before leaving home, had, as Perdita was now for the first time to learn, been more than half betrothed to Lucrezia, the daughter of a noble and powerful house. During his absence, political and other reasons had arisen to make a speedy alliance between the two families

more than ever desirable. The preparations, said his mother, had been hastened, and the nuptials are at hand.

'Rafael, caught in a web from which he saw no way of escape, preferred a secret to an open disgrace. Yielding to the force of circumstances, he submitted reluctantly to fulfil his part, and obey his mother's command. And Perdita had to be present throughout. She would die now sooner than speak. As his page she was in attendance on him, and stood by his side during the festivities. As his page she was presented by Rafael to the bride Lucrezia. The marriage was celebrated with pomp and state, but Perdita stood by, stung to death by the desertion of her lover. As the evening drew on, Rafael sent for the page to sing to him and his bride his favourite song :

"Vengo da parte addove sempre 'ne pianto
Stace una donna—"

'She sang and sang; still he called for it again. Till on a sudden the singer's voice failed, and she sank fainting on the ground. Rafael rushed up in alarm, to find hanging round his page's neck the locket he had given as a parting pledge to Perdita. Too late he recognised her, and rued his treachery now that she lay dying before him. In his sudden remorse and despair he stabbed himself; and Count Dario, who had followed Perdita, and succeeded in tracing her at last, broke in to find the fatality that threatened his child fulfilled upon her and her lover.'

I stopped, and there was a solemn pause.

'That is the nearest approach to an original idea I can give, and it is as old as Puss-in-Boots, as I told you.'

'Thank you for the story all the same,' said Mr. Gerard, rising.

'What do you think of it?'

'O, that it's exactly what I want—what I was trying to make up,' he said, laughing. 'The next step is to put it into some sort of rhyme. I shall come down upon you for that next time we meet.'

And he left us. Eva lit the candles and began painting. I walked up and down the room like an animal in a cage, in a ridiculous state of latent excitement—calm at the moment, but ready to laugh, cry, sing, dance, on the smallest provocation.

'Eva,' I began at last, 'what do you think of Mr. Gerard?'

'Well, you know, I admire him deeply, and think him a kind of paragon of men.'

'But why, Eva, why? You call him clever, yet he cannot paint like you, nor play like Herr von Zbirow, nor sing and act like Theodore Marston. Is he learned? No. Is he famous? No. Can he do anything better than anybody else? No. Why, the very mountebank in the street who can keep six balls flying in the air at once has the advantage of him by excelling in something. Yet you call him a superior being. What do you mean by it?'

But Eva was not to be taken aback by any volley of words.

'Depend upon it, there is something, Maisie. If he does not shine out in any department it must be because he is too perfectly developed.'

I burst out laughing.

'Defend us from perfect development,' I cried, 'if eternal mediocrity is to be its result.'

But Eva was obstinate.

'Distinction is scarcely to be had except by the cultivation of one gift at the expense of all others.'

'So Mr. Gerard is too good in general to be anything in particular. Is that it?'

'Yes, I suppose so. But why this catechism?'

'Because, dear,' and I knelt down beside her, and hid my face whilst I spoke in a bunch of peonies that stood in a blue-gray jug, 'I have seen lots of famous men; lions—literary lions, artistic lions, social lions of all ages and sorts and kinds—and some of them were charming people too. Yet if I was a man, and had my choice, I would rather be Mr. Gerard than any one of them.'

'Is that all?' asked Eva, amused at this somewhat novel mode of praise.

'And I admire him more than all of them put together, and I feel sure that if he will never set the Thames on fire it is only because he will never try.'

'Is that all?' she repeated, laughing at me.

'Isn't it enough?' said I, rising indignantly. I thought it a good deal myself, and assured her she should hear no more that night.

But to her surprise and mine he came several times in the course of the next few weeks. I wondered why. Our tea was not above the five-o'clock average. He had never, Eva let drop, thought him of calling upon her before. Then the conversation was mostly between him and myself, Eva listening with the patience of an angel that she was.

What, then, was the attraction? Myself? Was it likely, now? Jasper Gerard was a man over thirty, who had lived (not vegetated) away half his life, travelled, loved no doubt, and by nature and education the most fastidious of mortals. Was it likely, was it even conceivable, that on such an insignificant person as I must have appeared in his eyes he should waste a second thought?

It is certainly rather hard that

a man should never be supposed by women to do the smallest thing without some wise purpose. That Mr. Gerard had no definite design in coming to our studio, beyond the fact that he had found out it made a pleasant lounge, was too simple an explanation to recommend itself.

Such is the penalty of masculine greatness!

But an evil genius, speaking nothing but the truth, as devils always do when they mean real mischief, whispered instead, 'Jasper Gerard has come to that age when a man worth anything is sickened with the glitter and show that make up three-quarters of the world, and proof against the artificial and meretricious. Unconsciously, perhaps, he prizes reality first above all things, and it pleases him to meet with it. You, for instance, do not attempt to look different from what you are—to dress like a duchess, which you are not, to express feelings you have not got, nor to hide those you have. So he finds something refreshing, something new, it may be, in your society, and that is why he seeks it.'

I forced myself to break off, nor take to wing in a land of thoughts created by wish. But it was only to go over to Eva's, perhaps there to meet Mr. Gerard himself and beatitude; or perhaps he would not come, and I went home disgusted. But these disappointments grew rarer and rarer.

One day he came there on an errand for his mother. Mrs. Gerard had commissioned him to induce Eva to come and paint for her at the Priory. There was a fine aviary attached to the conservatory, and the idea had been started that the canaries, parquets, and waxbills should be depicted 'at home,' among palms, plantains, cactus, and other tro-

pical shrubs there forthcoming for backgrounds.

'I shall like it extremely,' replied Eva, delighted. 'Please to thank Mrs. Gerard, and say that in about three weeks' time I shall be at liberty, and staying altogether at Westburn, so I could give my whole time to the Priory.'

Longer and longer grew my face as she spoke, lower and lower sank my spirits. In about three weeks' time my mother, the twins, and I were going to the seaside for several months, a pleasure trip I always took very sadly indeed. The thought of it alone, at that moment, was enough to make me lapse into silence which I scarcely broke till our visitor was gone. As he left and shook hands with me he asked,

'Shall we ever see you at Westburn? When Miss Severn makes our conservatory her studio, won't you share it sometimes?'

I wanted to speak, but something seemed to choke me, and I could only smile vacantly in reply.

'Maisie,' began Eva warningly, when we were alone; but suddenly breaking off and changing her tone, she exclaimed, 'Dear child, I don't know what to think, but I do begin to suspect that Jasper Gerard—'

'Hush, hush!' said I, bestowing ruinous caresses on a pot of mignonette; 'why should he?'

'Listen, Maisie. You said you were going to the seaside next month. Let the others go; but you come and spend a few weeks with me at Westburn.'

I looked up radiant. 'Are you in earnest?'

'Of course I am. Uncle will be delighted. Will you come?'

I only threw myself into her arms.

'But, Eva,' I resumed seriously, 'before we move a step out of

this room there is a question you must answer.'

'Well, let me hear it. But why this solemn tone?'

'Because it's a solemn moment. Swear to speak the truth.'

'I promise.'

'Mr. Gerard,' said I, in a formal constrained voice, 'is he a man that you care, or ever could care for, yourself? because—'

I said no more. Eva stopped me by a laugh so hearty that it answered me at once.

'No, Maisie, ten times no. I admire him, but get no farther. He fills me with awe now, just as he did when we were children

of ten or twelve, and I used to play battledore with him at the Priory. He was always very gentle, and used to ask what he had done to make me so afraid. There is something unapproachable about him, and I should as soon think of falling in love with a king or a high-priest.'

Exactly. There was a touch of the monarch in his nature which affected people in opposite ways. Eva's conservative turn of mind kept her at a respectful distance. I think it was that very imperial faculty that drew me to him with an irresistible attraction.

(To be continued.)

AT THE PANTOMIME.

CLEAR laughter shrill from childish throats, on older lips a smile,
At mimic scenes that for the hour life's carking cares beguile;
For who so stern can look around, upon the tiers on tiers
Of happy faces, but must needs recall again the years

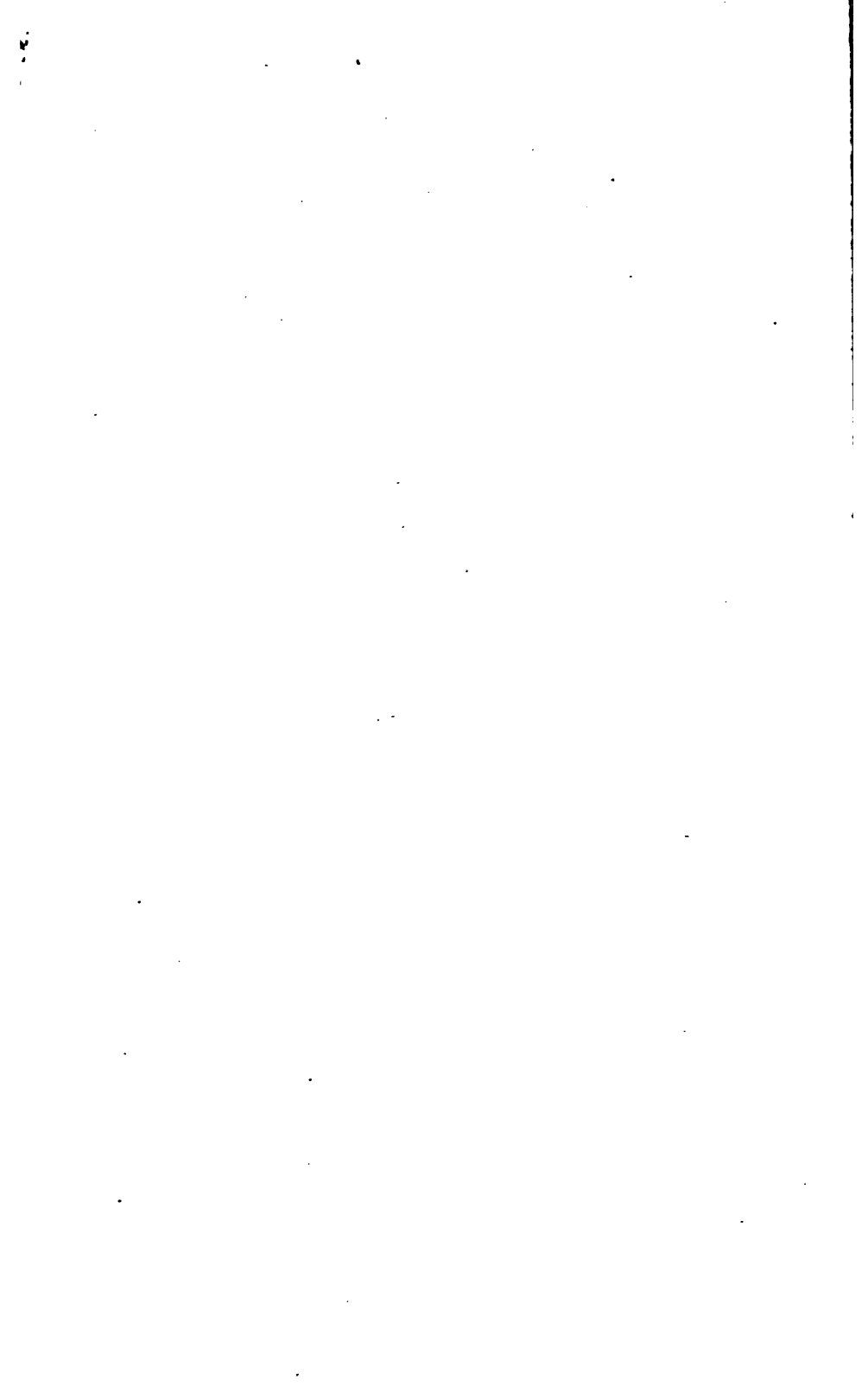
Of his own childhood, when to him was *real* each bright scene,
Each pantomimic jest true wit, each tinsell'd fay a queen?
Illusions that—alas, too soon!—must fade and vanish fast;
But bright and pure and innocent and joyous *while they last*.

A mother-rose—sweet English flower!—amid her rosebuds sits;
Across the father's graver face a passing sun-smile flits;
And Jessie, half in scorn, half mirth, from corner glances down,
Her dignity *compell'd* to yield at antics of the clown.

The childish faces flush with rose; his mother's eldest joy
His growing manhood throws aside, and is once more a boy.
We, weather-beaten, who have known life's sunshine and life's rain,
In our sweet blossoms, *this one night*, grow young and bloom again.

O human flowerets, fresh and pure, new open'd in life's spring,
God grant that blessings to ye all the coming years may bring!
And that the scenes ye greet to-night with silvery laughter clear
May be but types of those to come for many a happy year!

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.







A BOX AT THE PANTOMIME.



WINTER RESORTS OF LONDON SOCIETY.

MONACO—MENTONE—BORDIGHERA—SAN REMO.

FORTY-TWO minutes by rail from Nice, and seventeen minutes by rail from Mentone, is Monte Carlo. Examine the railway time-tables, you will see that every train, of every sort of speed, not omitting those of *la grande vitesse*, stops there. M. Le Blanc and the directors of the Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles Railway, complaisant where the interests of their railway are concerned, so will it.

Who is M. Le Blanc, and what is Monte Carlo, that directors not famous for being over-accommodating should agree to stop all trains between Marseilles and Genoa, and *vice versa*, at this station?

M. Le Blanc, though not king of the place—for is not Charles Honoré III., Prince of Monaco and Rocca-bruna, &c., lord paramount and feudal sovereign of Monte Carlo and of the three adjacent square miles?—is a very powerful mayor of the palace. His Highness of Monaco would on no account be quit of him. Not only has he nothing to fear from him in the way of ‘compassing the crown’—has not the Prince twenty-five soldiers, of all arms, and two thousand devoted subjects besides?—but he derives through him the means of making that crown sit comfortably on his own head. Thanks to M. Le Blanc, very ‘easy lies the head that wears the crown’ of Monaco. M. Le Blanc is a veritable pillar of the state. From his hands flow the means of paying the Prince’s army, from the first to the twenty-fifth man; through him it is that this Prince is able to absolve his subjects from all tax-paying—happy Arca-

dians; through him that quaint fortified castle-palace of the Grimaldi is maintained in habitable condition, with something *à boire*, *et à manger* too, for the owner; through him not only the whilom barren rock of Monte Carlo, but the seaward scarp of Monaco itself, has bloomed into the most lovely of semi-tropical gardens. M. Le Blanc is ‘the genius of the shore.’ His philanthropy Monaco-wards is wonderful. Though an alien—for France claims M. Le Blanc’s allegiance—he contributes everything, pays for everything, demands nothing, except—the right to make a ‘hell’ of one of the fairest spots on the face of the earth.

Monte Carlo is the last surviving public gaming-place in Europe. Homburg, Wiesbaden, Spa, Baden-Baden, having passed through a purgatory of gambling, have entered, let us hope, on a purer existence. They must have drawn largely, one would think, on the stock of cleansing fires ere the sins done in their gambling lifetime were ‘burnt and purged away.’ But however that may be, they have as a matter of fact repented, and now ‘live cleanly,’ as gentlemanly cities should. Monte Carlo survives them, surpassing the best of them in the loveliness of its scenery, and rivaling the most completely organised of them in the thoroughness of its interior arrangements. That this is no small praise, those of our readers will admit who remember the well-ordered saloons of Baden, the brilliant Kursaal of Homburg, and the master-spirit which pervaded everything, from the designs

on the card-backs to the judicial calm of the croupiers at the spa of the Ardennes.

Without question, Monaco and its outlying Monte Carlo are fair to look upon. Sated as the eye of the traveller eastward must be with the beauties of the Riviera, involuntarily it lightens up and is conscious of a new pleasure as the territory of Charles Honoré III. bursts upon the view. The sea-girt rock, which rises to a height of a hundred and sixty feet, and upon the summit of which stands the town of Monaco, with the fortress that Vauban built to protect it on the land side, stands out to the right of the picture; beyond it, and on three sides of it, the deep-blue water of the Mediterranean splashes and tumbles; while Nature, seemingly jealous of the beauty of the scene, forbids low tide and the discovery of those marine horrors of mud and shingle incidental to it. The palm and the orange-tree, the eucalyptus and the pepper-tree, crowd out the sombre olive which dominates in all neighbouring landscapes; and the introduction and careful culture of every form of semi-tropical growth contribute to an effect which is exceptional even in this very exceptional district. From the foot of the causeway, which leads to the gate of the town, an inverted arc, a mile from horn to horn, leads along the shore to the slope of Monte Carlo. Nature has done little for Monte Carlo beyond giving a lovely site. The abrupt rock, barren of vegetation, avoided even by the goats, who had tried it and found it wanting, owes its present wealth of beauty to art and the fostering lavish hand of M. Le Blanc. Terraces cut out of the hillside, and carpeted with the softest lawns, hold gardens in which the floriculturist reigns supreme. Considerations of expense enter not; no-

thing is allowed to impede the progress of the place towards becoming a refreshment to the eye and mind, and that 'joy for ever' which beauty is. Statues and fountains, fish-ponds and aviaries, lend their charms. Art vies with Nature to collect and to develop all that can attract to this lovely spot. Music hath her shrines shrouded in daintiest foliage, and here, many a time and oft, may be heard the sweetest strains that floated through the souls and brains of Gounod, Beethoven, or Mozart. In the great concert-halls of Monte Carlo sings the *primissima* of *prime donne*, and there too gather for the great festivals of Le Blanc the cream of the sweet-throated who sing.

Incomparable are the views which are to be had from the gardens of Monte Carlo; comparable only to fairy work are the contents of the gardens themselves; and should the visitor, wearied with these pleasures, seek repose or that refreshment which the most poetically minded cannot dispense with, he cannot find on the continent of Europe better fare or better lodging than at the Hôtel de Paris, within the grounds of this enchanted garden of Armida. It is true he will be warned there, on taking up his abode, that he must carefully lock, not only the door of his room, but each door and cupboard therein, 'for fear of accidents;' true, also, that should he be so taken up with the beauties of the surroundings as to be heedless of the attraction of the grand *salon de jeu*, he will find, after a few days, that his rooms 'have been promised some time ago' to a Russian noble or a Sicilian count. But in the mean time the visitor may enjoy himself very much indeed, and at a moderate cost, without even entering the mystic temple where Fate pronounces upon the chances at roulette, and Experience

teaches how great are the odds against players of that simple game, or at trente-et-quarante.

If in Regent-street or elsewhere in the metropolis of London society a company are surprised over such a board of green cloth as is to be found repeated many times in the *salon de jeu* at Monaco, every member of that company is pretty certain to be shown up in the next day's police-sheet as an evil-doer of the blackest type. The fact of being found in such places as private 'hells' are, and must be, is of itself dead against a man who cares much for his character; but the homily he will have to listen to from 'the worthy magistrate,' and the fine he will have to pay, or the imprisonment he will suffer in default, will proceed upon the text, not that he was in the place, but that he was there for unlawful gambling. Circumstances alter cases very materially. That which is wicked in London, and punishable there with penalties, social as well as legal, is not only lawful, it is even enjoined by authority at Monaco.

The magistrate who condemned Mr. Punter Sharp at Great Marlborough-street may here realise a practical sympathy with his prisoner, and having, 'just for the fun of the thing,' or to please that charming-looking daughter of his, deposited his *louis*, losing or winning on it, upon the zero, may understand King Lear's strange question, 'Which is the justice, which the thief?' Every vice in the list of human offences has been fashionable in its turn in England, and there have not been wanting periods when several vices at once competed with nearly equal success for the mastery. Gambling is out of fashion now, except at clubs, at the grand-stands and paddocks of race-courses, and in those select private circles into which the po-

lice enter not, and therefore have no jurisdiction.

At Monaco, gambling is not only in fashion, it is at once the life and the occasion of life in the place. For it, and in its name, were reared those handsome halls, mirrored and candelabra'd, velvet-furnished and polished exceedingly as to floors and walls, which adjoin the Hôtel de Paris and stand at the top of the enchanted garden. In its service are enrolled those gaily-dressed bandsmen who discourse such eloquent music, those plush-breeched green-coated servitors, who stand so janitor-like at the doors and about the rooms, ready to bow obedience to the moneyed *habitué*, or to collar and eject the 'susppect' and the 'welcher.' In its service manifestly have been educated those sombre leaden-eyed men, pale of face and dirty of shirt-collar, who sit on either side the centre of the table, and with ceaseless monotony spin the wheel of roulette, while comrades rake up or shovel out the consequences of the game. Whether they were ever young or blithe, whether they ever were the object of a mother's solicitude, or whether they were, like Macbeth, not of woman born, are questions which not unnaturally arise as one looks at their cheerless faces all bereft of sunshine. There they sit, day after day, hour after hour, at the gaming-tables, their only variation being from roulette to trente-et-quarante or rouge-et-noir.

One misses at Monaco the hollow-toned exhortation, '*Faites vos jeux, messieurs, faites vos jeux,*' and its natural accompaniment, '*Le jeu est fait,*' which used to be heard at Spa and Baden in old days. Silence is the rule of Monaco, broken only by the click of the roller as it falls into one of the wheel spaces, and by the judicial declaration of the result, delivered

sotto voce by the chief croupier.

But, apart from this, there is exactly the same arrangement, the same scrupulous fairness on the part of the bank, the same perfect trust in the ultimate advantage of that institution, the same reliance without touting on the natural attractions of play to allure poor humanity into the swing, that characterised the German and Belgian play-places. The only advertisement resorted to by the proprietor is in the shape of those charming gardens which beautify the place, those balls at which the beauty and ugliness of Nice delight to congregate, those *Tirs aux Pigeons* where a thousand pounds represents the *Grand Prix de Monaco*, those magnificent concerts from which, out of purely local and personal considerations, the music of *Orphée aux Enfers* should be for ever excluded. The reward of M. Le Blanc, the provider of all these things, the owner of this beautiful 'hell,' is ample, after its kind. In spite of the occasional visits of 'portents,' like the Maltese Bugeija, who, by wisdom or strange luck, found his way to win vast rouleaux from the bank; in spite of the raids which other mediums of the Bugeija stamp make upon his resources, the proprietor is in the long-run justified in his ghastly joke — 'Jouez sur rouge ou vert, c'est Le Blanc qui gagne.' That he does gain is not only matter of notoriety, it is evident from the facts we have recited, from the apparently unremunerative expenditure he is able to make so freely, from an hour's observation of the crowds who throng the roulette-tables. All the world, men and women too, of every nation, come to pour their wealth into the lap of this *Croesus*. The picture has been drawn times out of number. Witnesses of far

greater power than the present writer have described the intensity of expectation, the flush of success, the agony of disappointment, the stolid impassiveness, the nervous effort to appear nerveless, which may be seen stamped on the faces of the throng around the table. Artists have fixed the scene indelibly on their canvas. Why attempt to repeat the account? M. Le Blanc grows rich by voluntary offerings at the shrine of the great goddess whose high-priest he is. It is pure individual volition, apart from influence exercised by him, he will say, that brings trainsful of players from Nice and from Mentone to his gaming-place. The people come in hope of winning from him, not with the idea of losing to him, and 'I take my chance,' he adds, with a shrug of the shoulders, and asks, like another historical personage, whether he is his brother's keeper.

What is it to him that people play who cannot afford to lose, that families are ruined by the means which he provides, that duels and suicides and other forms of murder grow out of his entertainments? Is he responsible because doubtful characters, and many which are not doubtful, from all nations that are, choose to come to his palaces? Has he not directed that visitors at the hotel shall be warned against the prying habits of *chevaliers d'industrie*, and does he not provide funds for the pay of those five-and-twenty warriors serving in the armies of Monaco, who are bound by every consideration of duty and conscience to arrest such offenders? What has he to do with public morality, or the tendency of human nature to become debased by the exercises he provides for it? He is not accountable for human nature; he is human (so he says) himself, and he is as much entitled to take ad-

vantage of the weaknesses of human nature as the Stock-Exchange man who coins a fortune out of lies which he has helped to circulate, or as the shipowner who looks to his assurers rather than to his venture as the means of writing a profit on the voyage of an ill-found ship.

The defenders of M. Le Blanc wax quite eloquent on the great wrong done to him by impugnors of his Monte Carlo. They insist upon regarding him as the Lord Bountiful of Monaco, to whom all Europe is indebted for providing in the territory and by the permission of Charles Honoré a class of entertainment which the prudery of less enlightened rulers has forbidden elsewhere. And when, as they point out, to this virtue he adds this other of universal hospitality, of devotion to the cause of the beautiful both in Nature and Art, they are indignant at the accusations brought against their patron.

The moralists must decide as they will about M. Le Blanc's claims, which are, after all, neither here nor there. It must rest with that not inconsiderable section of London society who resort to Nice and Mentone for the winter how far they will countenance a place and a system which stand condemned by the law of their own country and by the law of most civilised nations; how far they will subject their families to contact with the people who frequent the Monaco tables; how far they will encourage, even by their unassisting presence, a practice which the world's experience has proved to be pernicious.

Monaco itself can hardly be blamed for allowing the existence of Monte Carlo. A principality of which the traditions savour chiefly of piracy and pillage cannot be accused for consistency. As in the Middle Ages, and even later, its fort-crowned rock and

sheltered harbour were the home of some of the worst pirates of the Mediterranean, so in more modern days the exactions of its princes forced the outlying people of the principality to declare their independence, and to join themselves to the kingdom of Piedmont. First Mentone, then Roccabruna, in 1848, revolted from the small tyrannies of Monaco; and the tiny survival of mediæval feudalism lives by the contempt as much as by the allowance of France and Italy. As it is, Monaco remains, and we suppose will remain, a source of profit to the Prince, to M. Le Blanc, and to the railway, and a source of injury to Nice and Mentone, towns which money-bringing heads of families are more and more avoiding, because of proximity to Monaco, till some French ruler takes it into his head to abate the nuisance, and to extinguish a monarchy about whose fate no European conference will concern itself.

We gladly take leave of this lovely spot, marred for the present by the Demon of Play; and while acknowledging that the spirit keeps his house as well swept and garnished as that other spirit who was erst cast out of possession, we none the less return with relief to the purer atmosphere of Mentone, where roulette is unlawful and rouge-et-noir forbidden.

What a pleasant thing to look upon is that double bay in which Mentone stands! *Ah, ce bon Menton, ville charmante, mais diablement triste! L'air en est bon pour les poitrinaires. Voilà tout!* Our own opinions and those of our excellent French friend on the subject of this beautiful winter resort are only in partial accord, but there is no great divergence.

That the air is 'bon pour les poitrinaires' may be assumed from the number of those unhappy-look-

ing specimens of humanity one meets on the Plage and Promenade, in the hotels, everywhere, at Mentone. The eastern bay may be said to be theirs in fee-simple. There they sun themselves when the ill wind that blows nobody any good—that is, the ‘mistral’—permits them to go out; and on such occasions they may be found in every place that has the least claim to be considered ‘abritée.’

Of ‘places abritées’ there are many at Mentone; for unlike Cannes, where the country is much more open, the cliffs, ascending by rapid steps into veritable mountains, stand immediately behind the town of Mentone, and shield it, especially on the eastern side, from all winds. The eastern bay is in fact an exaggerated Ventnor, the backing, however, reckoning a thousand for every hundred feet of the Isle of Wight cliff. The western bay, severed from its compeer by a sharp point of land, and by the river which cuts the town into two, is much more open, and much more agreeable also to those who are not compelled by the necessity of their case to breathe only a hot-house atmosphere.

From the back-windows of any of the numerous hotels built on the western side of the river is a charming view—it was to this my French friend alluded when he tersely described the town—of the near mountains, and of those beginnings of mountains crowned with monasteries and with ruined remembrances of mediæval castles, which intervene between them and the shore.

Creature-comforts in the shape of excellent hotels, whose name is legion, are more abundant at Mentone than at any other place on the Riviera. Prices much the same as at Cannes, but perhaps rather lower, while the accommodation is not at all inferior. Still as regards the *tristesse*, no doubt

my French friend was right. There is something depressing in the very air of Mentone, a savour of ill-health unto sickness, which not even the extraordinary beauties of the scenery can shake off. At every turn one meets so many of the *poitrinaires* for whom the air is so good; and interested though one may be in watching the progress of these *malades*, the effect is not calculated to raise the mercury in one’s mental barometer. One who is not strictly of their number, and obliged to live in the eastern bay, would do well for every reason to seek his quarters in the Hôtel Splendide, Hôtel du Pavillon, du Prince de Galles, or some other of the good houses on the Monaco side. So may he hope to enjoy without too much *memento mori* the beautiful views and most enjoyable drives which are to be had in the neighbourhood.

If he be strong of limb and lung he may get some climbing, despicable perhaps to members of the Alpine Club, but for the average Briton, who has bounds to his ambition cloudwards, amply sufficient as an exercise; whilst the range of view to be gained by an ascent of four thousand five hundred feet—and many of the Mentone hills are of this height—will be reward indeed. He will enjoy a prospect grander in every way than that much-prized view from the summit of the Cannes Californie, or from the Nice heights behind Cimies. A background of Maritime Alps, with hill and mountain in every shape and form, and a view east and west of fifty miles of the Riviera, set off by a deep-blue band of the Mediterranean, in which Corsica can be seen rising high out of the sea seventy miles off, give a picture which one cannot readily forget, especially if he have had the good fortune to be lucky in his sunlight effects.

Those weaker vessels, male and female, who cannot achieve these things may yet insure on mule or in carriage an intense enjoyment of the beauties of the place. They can drive on the flat road, through orange-groves and olive-gardens, to the Cape of St. Martin, the western horn of the bay; they can drive along and through the eastern promenade, and for as long as they please along the Corniche road, across the Gorge of St. Louis, with its picturesque bridge and pathetic legend. They can by the permission of Dr. Bennett visit the curious and highly-interesting garden in which that eminent physician has gathered specimens of every flower and every shrub that will grow in the genial air of the place. If of a romantic turn, they can perform pilgrimages to many a place of which troubadours have sung; and they can recall upon the spot, with all the natural accessories to help them, many a scene of Moslem valour and Christian heroism. The Marquis of Lorne's 'Tale of the Riviera' will assist them mightily therein, and will repay their attention besides.

Having done these things, however—having taken in the sights that are to be seen, the views that are to be viewed—the truth of the Frenchman's remark forces itself upon the attention. One grows listless, then bored, then wearied of the daily round of sameness which Mentone presents for one's recreation, and it is with a sense of relief combined with consciousness of a base ingratitude that one gathers up one's traps, and, bidding adieu to this latest acquisition of France, sets his face towards Savona.

If he have time and money to spare, or even if he have not, the traveller will hardly fail, if he has a soul for scenery, to travel eastward from Mentone by the Cor-

niche road, that great route which Napoleon cut in the face of the hillside, and which has outlived his Ligurian Republic, and those political transformations of his that drove the descendant of the Green Knight of Savoy from his kingdom of Piedmont to his island of Sardinia.

Whether he goes by the road or by the iron way he will be stopped at Ventimiglia. Ventimiglia is the frontier Italian town since Garibaldi's birthplace and the district in which it lies were sold to France, and the Italian boundary was removed from the left bank of the Var. At Ventimiglia he will have the usual custom-house inspection, and according as he manifests the extent of his property in *lire* he will be detained longer or shorter by the guardians of the royal Italian revenue. He will do well to resist the Englishman's temptation to use strong words or fierce looks on the occasion. These are indications *à priori* of the non-forthcomingness of *lire*, and this element in the question of inspection being eliminated, bluster will but recoil on the blusterer's head. In such case the Italian dignity, believing that it will get nothing on which to support itself, can be very stiff indeed and occasion a great deal of trouble. *Verbum sapienti*. Travellers will apply it or not, according to their opinion of the morality or otherwise of doing so.

Having passed the custom-house, another three miles' run brings one to Bordighera, where two capital hotels represent the nucleus of what is growing rapidly into a pleasant winter resort. All kinds of flattering things are said by the learned about the climate, its suitability to the tender-lunged, and its restorative power on rickety bronchial tubes; but it is probably necessary to belong to the strictly

invalid class in order to have the capacity for enjoying without satiety this kind provision of Nature. The traveller in ordinary health who stays at Bordighera, having been admitted to the hospitality of the *Hôtel d'Angleterre*, or to the still better *Hôtel de Bordighera*—where he will learn the opinion of the natives on the value of Italian currency by means of a conspicuous announcement, '*Che i conti si pagano in oro*'—will sally forth to view the place. He will discover first that Bordighera is not at Bordighera, as the railway reckons it, but at some distance off on the top of a hill; and that a straggling modern set of houses, which vainly try to aggregate themselves into a town, comprise what Americans would term the location. Bordighera itself is an old town, built according to the wisdom of its founders on a hill, away from the shore, and to that extent protected, or at least placed at an advantage in respect of the visits of piratical visitors, Turkish, Christian, or both, who were over fond of looking in at ports of call, where they were absolutely unwelcome. All the way between Genoa and Toulon one sees perched up towns on the tops of hills, some of them singularly high, even so as to oblige the inhabitants to fetch water from below. They have generally a castle, or a castellated monastery, dominating the hill-top itself, the place where provisions and weapons were stored as the defence against assault or siege.

Old Bordighera is such a town; not so picturesque as *Vence-Cagnes*, near *Antibes*, nor as *Roccabruna*, nor *Eza*, near *Monaco*, but still remarkable, and a fair type—even in the matter of smells—of what such a mediæval town can be.

Arrived at the top of the hill on which it stands, one is rewarded for his labour by the view pre-

sented; but he is seized also with that longing desire to get away which possessed *Robinson Crusoe* what time he ascended his mountain, and saw in the strange ship a chance of escape. The inducements to linger in the old town are few, and the new town is not yet formed. Under these circumstances the traveller returns thankfully to his inn on the *Plage*, and unless under a vow or in the active discharge of penance, hastens to 'fresh woods and pastures new.'

San Remo may hold him for a time, with its Italian decorated house-fronts, its bright gardens, its soft air, its picturesque situation, and its thoroughly English society. Here, rather than at Bordighera, will he seek to perform any vow which may be on him to spend time between *Mentone* and *Genoa*. Here he will lose something of his restlessness; here he will see the beginnings of what will develop into one of the best and most health-giving winter resorts of the lung-stricken. From all parts people are coming more and more each winter to *San Remo*; and if the municipality will only look to their drains in time, and insist on each new villa or house being decently constructed in this respect, they have the future making of the place in their own hands.

Between *San Remo* and *Genoa* no winter resorts stand, though, to use a Johnsonism, there is a 'potentiality' of them in several favoured spots. For the present, however, the accommodation provided in the established resorts between *Hyères* and *San Remo* is enough, and more than enough, for people mulcted of dividends,—Turkish, Egyptian, Peruvian,—and therefore unable for some years to come to indulge their fancy for winters abroad to the extent which has been fashionable.

Thus much, in the present num-

ber at all events, of some Winter Resorts of London Society. Till next month we shall be content to remain in our excellent quarters at the Grande Albergo in Genoa, enjoying daily, as one can enjoy in that fine old city, sights, scenes, associations, and memories which belong to all history and all time. Invalids cannot like the place, for its climate is as changeful as a young man's fancy; and its streets are so steep and capricious withal, in their ascents and descents, as to be only suited to the Genoese folk, whose sturdiness has become proverbial. But for those who are free to suit their own pleasure Genoa is a delightful place, full of many interests. If the aspect of the moderns offends one, he is at

no loss for companions. Was not Genoa the home of the Grimaldi, of the Spinole, and the Balbi? Were not the Doria among its admirals? was not Cristoforo Colombo its citizen? There is no lack in Genoa of good quarters, good music, good pictures, fine churches, fine streets, splendid palaces, and good company.

With these the present writer will content himself—as any one indeed may—till next month. Then he will set off, with as many as like to accompany him—in these pages, and in a purely imaginary steamer, for one of the oldest and best, though of late years disregarded, winter residences—the fortress island of Malta.

FRANCIS DAVENANT.



A JAPANESE LOVE STORY.

— ♦ —
'The only girl I ever loved,' *Ancient Remark.*

THE temple at the little village of Meguro, outside the town of Yedo, is celebrated as being the last scene of a highly instructive and sentimental story. The name of Meguro means 'black eyes;' but whether it obtained that appellation from the pugilistic habits of its people or not, I am unable to say. As France has her grave of Abelard and Héloïse for young people suffering from hopeless attachments, as England has her ballad of the forsaken maid of Woodstock town, and Scotland its 'Auld Robin Gray,' so Japan has its magic love-story of Kamarasaki and Gompachi. On my visit to the place, I was accompanied by a gay young Japanese, in the employment of the British Minister, who spoke most excellent English, and during the drive he told me that ~~this~~ was how it all happened.

In the old days, when Japan was Japan, three hundred years before the obtrusive foreign devil had come, buying up all the old *cloisonné*, and making bad railways and building inferior steamboats for the government at extortionate rates; when gentlemen wore two swords sticking out of their belts, and the Mikado was a man often heard of, but seldom seen,—there lived in an inland town a young man called Gompachi. He was a fine-grown young man, who had done credit to his seven or eight bowlfuls of rice and high fish per diem; and except a slight partiality for sakki and knocking-in late at nights, up to the time when the story commences, his parents must have had every reason to be

proud of him. But even as Rob the Grinder met with his fate through his fondness for singing-birds, so were dogs the rocks on which Gompachi's bark was destined to come to grief. Dogs of all kinds he loved, but of fighting-dogs it was that he considered himself especially a connoisseur. Where he found them in Japan I can't imagine; for a more pusillanimous lot, more addicted to vanishing round corners as you approach, and valiantly barking from the tops of roofs and other similar points of vantage as you retire, it would be impossible to find out of Egypt. However, he either bred, or found, or, what is more likely, stole a dog which was able and willing to tackle any canine brother to whom he might be opposed; and Gompachi, from that time forward, began to wear coats of a noisy pattern and 'obies' of a preposterous length; and other young men and their dogs got up and slid when he and his tyke were abroad; and he accumulated, by backing his animal, as many brass tempos as would fill a portmanteau—a collection amounting in value to two dollars, or, if brass happened to be up, two dollars and a half. But one day another well-grown young man came into the town, and he also had a dog, and was willing to make a match of it; and so the appointed day came, Gompachi on the ground, leading his champion, and swaggering and rattling the tempos in his pocket, and offering odds on his favourite, as was his wont to do. His opponent was also of a speculative turn of

mind, and so the bets were made and the fight commenced. The battle was so equal and sanguinary that at length both dogs lay dead upon the ground; but before giving his final kick, very much to the appreciation of all the cats in the neighbourhood, Gompachi's dog had chewed off more than an inch of his opponent's tail, and on this ground his master claimed both the victory and the bets. The new-comer—who, if he had lived, might evidently have become a Japanese Gladstone—refused to pay, but declared himself willing to refer the matter to arbitration, and even hinted that two other courses were open for settling the dispute. Gompachi, however, would have none of it.

'Stump up, or I shall make you!' was all he said.

'Make your mongrel disgorge that inch and a half of my dog's tail!' said the other.

Words like these in Japan can only have one ending. It was out swords and cut three times, before you could say 'knife.' Gompachi was one too many for the stranger, who soon made a third corpse upon the ground. Then Gompachi wiped his bloody sword upon the paper handkerchief of his opponent, and took from his pocket all the small change he could find; after which he said he felt rather delicate in the chest, and thought a little sea-air and change would be about the best thing for him. And though for months afterwards the police kept asserting that they had received 'important information' as to his whereabouts, they always failed to produce his person to the authorities.

Gompachi walked away among the hills, till at last he met with some gentlemen who earned their living by sleight-of-hand tricks upon travellers on the Mikado's

highways; and as he began to have cravings for two or three of his usual wash-basinsful of rice, he gladly accepted their invitation to spend the night in their country house, which at that time consisted of a vast inaccessible cave; and thus having finished his imitation of Rob the Grinder, he commenced a career on the model of that immoral young Spanish gentleman, Gil Blas. The robbers had of course heard his tempos rattling in his pocket, and had noted with envious eyes the silver hilt of the sword which had cut short the possibly political career of his late antagonist. But, as I have before said, he was a well-grown young man, and they thought they might as well put off the charitable task of relieving him of these articles until such time as he should be sound asleep. So they brought out the rice and the fish and the usual impossible pickles and sakki, and spent a pleasant convivial evening with a slight tendency to feel muddled, till Gompachi arose, yawning mightily, and announcing his intention of placing his neck on the wooden dumb-bell which serves these people for a pillow, he went to sleep. He was awakened in the middle of the night, not by a pain in his neck or elsewhere, but by the apparition of a beautiful young girl of fifteen summers. Writers of novels and love-tales always say 'summers.' Gompachi noticed, when the sakki was out of his eyes, that she had a pair of the loveliest sparkling black ones he had ever seen peeping over a fashionable fan; a profusion of long dark hair, the neatest little sandals in the world, and a panier as big as a haystack. He began to hope that his queue was sticking properly forward down the middle of his head like a signpost, as the queues of Japanese exquisites should always do; and

him thus thinking, a voice like rippling water told of his danger.

'And if you please,' she said, 'they're sharpening their swords in the back cave at this moment, sir; and if you're not a bigger fool than you look, you'll get out of this place a great deal quicker than ever you came in, without so much as waiting to say "Woki-hi-arigato-ki-si-on-ara," which is, being interpreted, "Much obliged to you for your information, and good-night, my dear!"'

But then, with that want of consistency which makes her sex the ducks they are—except when arguing—she proceeded to inform him that she herself was the daughter of a wealthy old gentleman in Kigoto, who had made his money in the city, and that a few days before, when out for a moonlight ramble, she had been stolen by these robbers, who were making her cook and do for them all kind of horrid work, which was spoiling her hands and her figure ever so, and made her miserable, let alone there not being a bit of polished metal in the place to do her hair by.'

I will say this much for Gompachi, that he was not the kind of fellow to go sneaking off and leave her to her fate, and his next imitation was the only good one I can record of him. He whipped out his sword and posted himself behind the door, thereby ending his rôle of Gil Blas, and adopting that of Mr. R. Swiveller when he aroused the single lodger of Bevis Marks. And as the first robber put his head in, he was down upon it like a guillotine, and repeated himself like a recurring decimal as each successive robber came to look after his comrades, until he had polished off the entire dozen. Then possessing himself of such portable articles as took his fancy he made

the best of his way to Kigoto with the black-eyed moosmie, whose name I need scarcely inform my intelligent readers was Kamarasaki. Kigotean Belgravia made great rejoicings at the return of the missing damsel, though Mrs. Grundy, of course, had something to say about it, with unpleasant allusions to wonderful coincidences, the marines, &c. But her old father, who had made his fortune in Corean loans, and by floating companies for the opening of mines and other useful purposes, came out liberally, and offered Gompachi five hundred golden yen, and, what should have been of far greater value to him, the hand of the lovely Kamarasaki herself, who was now madly in love with her preserver. Gompachi had not the slightest objection to the five hundred yen, but as to the matrimonial side of the business he was not so clear. He was not indifferent to the lady's charms, but at any rate he thought he would like to have a look round the town of Yedo before his wings were clipped. I much fear that his mind was again running on fighting-dogs and book-making and loud suits. He therefore dissembled, as villains in love-stories invariably do, and said that he would be glad to avail himself of the happiness in store for him; but that first it would be necessary for him to go to Yedo to transact some highly important business. Her father, being a business man, rather liked this, and thought it augured well for the future. So Gompachi bade adieu to the sweet little Kamarasaki (the brute!), and told her in a false flirting kernoodling kind of way not to forget him, and that when the calls of the great commercial world ceased to press upon his anxious mind, he would return and make her Mrs.

Gompachi, and never dine at his club, or have bachelor friends to dinner, or smoke in the dining-room. Then he left for Yedo with a gay heart and a large umbrella, thinking how much prettier gold yen rattle in your pocket, as you walk, than brass tempos; and the poor little girl remained behind, to pour salt tears from those bright eyes into the gold-fish pond in the back-yard, and hold private rehearsals of imaginary conversations she would have with him when he returned, to no better audience than the sacred old family tortoise.

Gompachi was not destined to reach Yedo without further adventures. That habit of his of always rattling his money in his pocket was, to say the least of it, vulgar; and it would have been much better if the old city gent had given him a crossed cheque payable to order, and, best of all, if he had kept it for himself or his daughter. Gompachi was still a few miles from the town when it was getting dusk one day; and though the drowsy tinkling of his gold yen might have lulled the distant folds had there been any—there are no sheep in Japan—it had a very different effect upon six highway-men, who were looking out for work, and fell upon him tooth and nail. Gompachi, it has been, I think, conclusively proved, was no coward, and he had the heads of three of them on the ground in a twinkling; but the remainder pressed on him hard and had almost overpowered him, when the arrival of an eighth person on the scene caused them to regard flight as an eligible move. His rescuer turned out to be possessed of the name of Chobei, a wardman of Yedo; that is to say, he was not of the Samurai, or military class, who were composed of swashbucklers like our hero, but

he was an honest burgher, taking part in city affairs, such as sewers and water, and was altogether a stout, simple-hearted, honest old fellow, with more good-nature than sense about him, as the sequel will fully show. A man has always a drawing to another whom he has rescued from imminent danger. Chobei took Gompachi home with him to Yedo, and was so charmed with his manners and conversation that he begged he would continue his guest as long as he should remain in the city.

Gompachi now commenced the diligent prosecution of the important business which had so unavoidably brought him to Yedo. He went in for a regular new fit-out of the old kind of suits—large stripes and squares, with a green dragon across the chest and a pack of hounds down his back. He also bought himself several pairs of lacquered clogs, together with red umbrellas, and 'obies' of an even more preposterous length than of yore. I make no doubt that he would have set up a private 'juirikisha,' had that very handy vehicle been invented at this epoch; as it was, he was obliged to be contented with a gorgeous 'norima,' or sedan-chair, like a meat-safe, which soon became well known at all the local race-meetings, matches, and dog-fights; and youths in Yedo of a sporting turn began to know that they could always get the market odds from Gompachi, and that he was generally good for a quart of sakki, and any number of shovel-fuls of rice, if they had the good luck to meet him after ten o'clock p.m. How the respectable old Chobei could have stood this way of going on I can't imagine; but he appears to have endured it without a murmur, like a regular old Eli. His whole conduct shows him to have been a soft-hearted

old fool, and he swallowed all this, and a great deal more at the back, like a boa-constrictor; for Gompachi was always knocking-in late, and must have been heard nightly by Chobei offering inarticulate invitations to the police to assist him in putting his latch-key to any practical use, and was found deep in stertorous slumbers at six in the morning in his dirty clogs upon the nice clean matting, which is the very depth of bad manners in Japan. He was also a regular attendant at the theatres, and was to be found in the greenrooms, chucking the actresses under the chin, and calling them by their Christian, or rather their Pagan, names, and accompanying them home to the Yoshiwara after the opera was over, and standing suppers regardless of expense. Now the Yoshiwara is a place where no good well-brought-up young Japanese gentleman is ever heard of, or seen. And so matters went on, and Gompachi, from being a mere second-class country dandy, became a buck of the first water. He associated with young men whom one Vance, by an admiring country called 'the Great,' has distinguished by the title of the 'Rolling Rams,' or, if you like it better, was now a sort of Japanese 'Corinthian Tom.'

About this time it was rumoured among the fashionable Yedoeans that a most lovely and accomplished actress had come to the Yoshiwara, and would act the following week at the Yedoean Covent Garden of the period, it being positively her first appearance upon any stage. And numerous bets having been given and taken as to the colour of her eyes and hair, Gompachi, who, you may have observed, never allowed shyness to stand in the way of business or pleasure, thought he

would look round on the sly and see her previous to taking a few bets on the subject; and accordingly he called one afternoon and sent up his card, a flimsy piece of paper the size of a handkerchief, with his name printed in the centre, like the wards of a beer-cellar key. As he stood near the door, with his red umbrella in full bloom to shelter him from a possible dose of cold water which he fully expected would be sent him as a present from the top-story window, he was, greatly to his surprise, immediately admitted, and, before he knew where he was, the whitest arms in all Japan were round his neck, the prettiest face was buried in his bosom, and the brightest blackest eyes in the world were pouring salt tears of joy all over the green dragon and loud stripes that decorated his manly chest. Need I explain that the owner of all these incomparable charms was none other than the foolish darling little loving peerless Kamarasaki? Yes, she it was who now sat with her small white hand in the great splodgy paw of this vulgar unfaithful brute, who had never so much as given a thought for months and months to the pearl which had been placed so gratuitously beneath his feet. Little by little her story came out. She had nearly filled up the gold-fish pond with her tears, and had talked the sacred old family tortoise into his grave a thousand years or so before his time. Then she had noticed a change steal over the temper of her father. From being an easy-going pleasant old papa he had become each week more scruffy and aggravating, till one day he came home early, and sending his best clogs crashing through the paper window, he had calmly announced that the little game in the city

was all up. The Corean loan had been repudiated, and he had held on too long in the bubble companies, and was hoist with his own petard. To extricate himself from these difficulties, he had imported a cargo of Chinese nutmegs, which unfortunately for him had all turned out to be wooden ones. In a word, he was completely ruined, and could not pay three tempos in the yen; and at last things turned out so bad that his daughter, dear little Kamarasaki, had been obliged to come to Yedo and take a theatrical engagement to keep the family from starvation.

Gompachi, being one of those plausible fellows who could have talked the pigtail off a Chinaman, soon made it all square with poor little Kamarasaki, who had finished by mildly reproaching him, as well she might, for his cruelty and neglect. Whether any money was ever remitted to the old city gent, I am unable to say, but if so, I much fear it came out of the pockets of the little moosmie. Gompachi swore all kinds of perjuries; and she, poor thing, soon got quite bewildered with the gaiety of town life to which he introduced her. What chance had she to escape from the toils of this young swaggerer, who could look and say such winning loving things if he chose? So for some weeks they had a tremendous time of it, feeding the fish in the moat around the Shiro, or Tycoon's castle, and seeing all the races and wrestling and fine sights of the Asakusa, and having the height of fine living at the best tea-houses, till the wherewithal was all gone, and Gompachi could no longer go jingling his money as he walked, according to his wont.

As the obi and lacquered-clog makers began to call pretty often in the mornings about this time, leaving souvenirs of their visits in the shape of summonses, it became

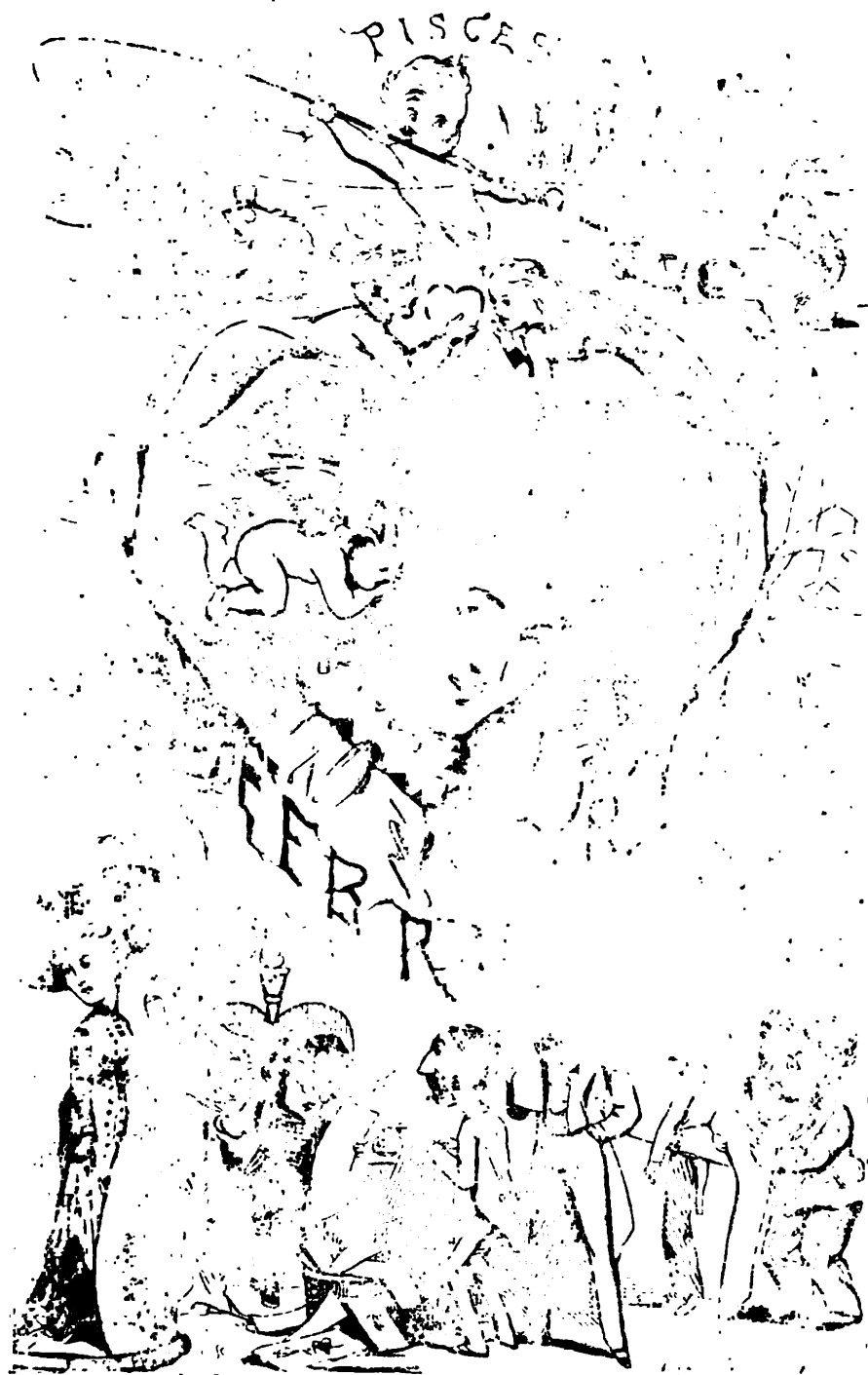
clear that money must be had from somewhere. Old Chobei had been squeezed quite dry, and as it never at any period of his life appears to have entered into the brain of this young man to work, Gompachi now commenced his last and most celebrated impersonation of well-known characters, and this time chose Mr. Turpin as his model. He took long solitary walks in the country, and knocked on the head corpulent old farmers returning from market, living faster and more furiously than ever; and Kamarasaki in her innocence thought it was all right, and that the money was the fruit of legitimate business. But, to draw my story to a close, this kind of thing could not last for ever. The tenth farmer proved too much for Gompachi, and being handed over to the authorities he shortly found himself where he ought to have been long before—viz. on the execution-ground above the temple of Asakusa; and soon after his head and body, in two separate pieces, adorned the highest gibbet in that place of skulls. The soft-hearted old Chobei, instead of saying that he had long foreseen it, and that it served him right, went, like an old imbecile, and bribed the Japanese authorities—with the same ease with which, if alive, he could bribe them in the present day—to let him have the body of this 'victim to circumstances;' a proceeding which all pious people with the odour of exclusive sanctity very strong, who comfort themselves with the idea of plenty of good hot brimstone for every one except the chosen few of their own Little Bethel, will no doubt deeply deplore. He laid the body in a grave which he dug with his own hands in the sacred ground of the shrine of Meguro, and went back sorrowing to his municipal duties and clean

mats; and the tragic tale of this well-grown immoral young snob was soon noised abroad throughout the city, till at last it reached the ear of Kamarasaki. Then she, poor child, arose and said never a word, but she went tripping along on her little clogs from out the gaudy Yoshiwara, and pattered away along the stony flags which lead to the temple of Asakusa, where the sacred pigeons dwell among the high eaves, and lame men offer sandals to the gods; and far beyond, she climbed the hill and crept along under the shadows of the cryptomerias that flank the path, thinking of the robbers' cave where he had fought for her so well, and the happy days spent with him in her father's house, and of the loving words and kisses with which he had stolen her heart and made her life so happy; and never letting one thought cross her despairing breast of his neglect, or his egregious snobbishness, or his abominable crimes, till she reached the place where her heart lay buried. And when she got to the grave, she flung herself on her face with a bitter cry, and drew the dagger which all Japanese girls keep beneath their obies, and know so well how to use; and then, first kissing the new-piled sods, she plunged the dagger into her breast, and the bright black eyes grew dim and glassy in death. Then old Chobei turned up again, like an amiable undertaker, and laid them side by side, and above them he put a large stone, which remains unto this day, to mark their resting-place. And all the young men of Yedo ever since who have sweethearts, and who have found that the settlements are all right, and that there is no fear of the money reverting back to the family in case of their wives dying without issue, make their vows here, and plight

their troth, and write beautiful couplets, like those you find in Mr. Gunter's crackers, and twist the long strips of paper on which they are written among the branches which overshadow the tomb.

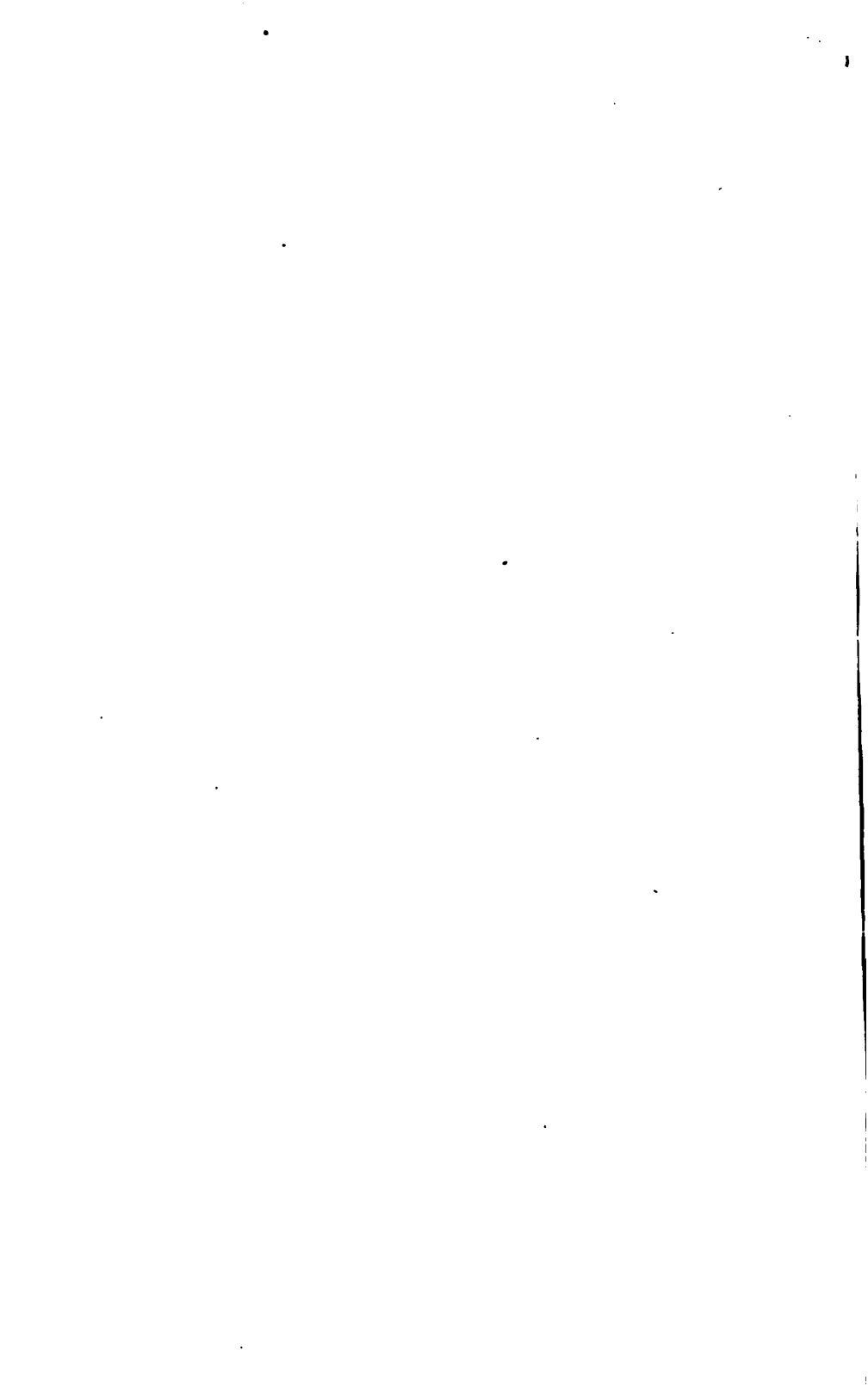
Such is the story as I heard it from the Japanese young gentleman who spoke such excellent English—a story which every boy and girl in Japan knows by heart; and as I stood looking at the old cracked moss-grown stone one sunny evening, there occurred to me the following thoughts: First, how strange it is that so many things which are of themselves innocent and harmless should lure us to our ruin, even as Rob the Grinder was undone by singing-birds, Gompachi by dogs, English gentlemen by horses, and little Kamarasaki by her natural affections and confiding nature. Secondly, how little difference there is between human nature three hundred years ago, when all this took place, and in the year of grace 1876, and how alike it is in longitude 0 and longitude 148 east of Greenwich. Thirdly, that I am myself acquainted with several Gompachis—a little altered, certainly, to meet modern requirements, but essentially the same—who are probably at this moment walking about the neighbourhoods of Pall-mall and Belgravia. Fourthly, that if ever I, a vagabond bachelor, should meet with an English moosmie possessing the charms and faithfulness of Kamarasaki, I would instantly propose to her, and, if accepted, try to behave better to her than did this gay young Japanese swell. And so, lighting a contemplative pipe, I returned to Yedo with, I am not ashamed to say, a kind thought in my heart for the memory of the faithful soft-hearted old Chobei.

GEORGE A. HOLME.



THE MODERN ZODIAC
AN ARTIST'S ALMANAC OF ENGLISH SOCIETY

[illegible]



MICHAEL STROGOFF, OR THE RUSSIAN COURIER.

BY JULES VERNE.

PART II.

CHAPTER VIII.

A HARE CROSSES THE ROAD.

MICHAEL STROGOFF might at last hope that the road to Irkutsk was clear. He had distanced the Tartars, now detained at Tomsk, and when the Emir's soldiers should arrive at Krasnoiarsk they would only find a deserted town. There being no immediate communication between the two banks of the Yeniseï, a delay of some days would be caused until a bridge of boats could be established, which would be a difficult matter.

For the first time since the encounter with Ivan Ogareff at Omsk, the courier of the Czar felt less uneasy, and began to hope that no fresh obstacle would arise to delay his progress.

The kibitka, after descending obliquely towards the south-west for fifteen versts, found and continued the long path traced across the steppe.

The road was good, for the part of it which extends between Krasnoiarsk and Irkutsk is considered the best in the whole journey; fewer jolts for travellers, large trees to shade them from the heat of the sun, sometimes forests of pines or cedars covering an extent of a hundred versts. It was no longer the wide steppe with limitless horizon; but the rich country was empty. Everywhere they came upon deserted villages. The Siberian peasantry had vanished. It was

a desert, but, as has been said, a desert by order of the Czar.

The weather was fine, but the air, which cooled during the night, took some time to get warm again. Indeed it was now near September, and in this high region the days were sensibly shortening. Autumn lasts but a very little while, although this part of Siberian territory is not situated above the fifty-fifth parallel, which is the same as Edinburgh and Copenhagen. However, winter succeeds summer almost unexpectedly. These winters of Asiatic Russia may be said to be precocious, considering that during them the thermometer falls until the mercury is frozen nearly 42 degrees below zero, and that 20 degrees below zero is considered a supportable temperature.

The weather favoured our travellers. It was neither stormy nor rainy. The heat was moderate, the nights cool. The health of Nadia and Michael was good, and since leaving Tomsk they had gradually recovered from their past fatigues.

As to Nicholas Pigassof, he had never been better in his life. To him this journey was a trip, an agreeable excursion by which he employed his enforced holiday.

'Decidedly,' said he, 'this is pleasanter than sitting twelve hours a day, perched on a stool, working the manipulator!'

Michael had managed to get Nicholas to make his horse quicken his pace. To obtain this result,

he had confided to Nicholas that Nadia and he were on their way to join their father, exiled at Irkutsk, and that they were very anxious to get there. Certainly, it would not do to over-work the horse, for very probably they would not be able to exchange him for another; but by giving him frequent rests—every fifteen versts, for instance—sixty versts in twenty-four hours could easily be accomplished. Besides, the animal was strong, and of a race calculated to endure great fatigue. He was in no want of rich pasturage along the road, the grass being thick and abundant. Therefore, it was possible to demand an increase of work from him.

Nicholas gave in to all these reasons. He was much moved at the situation of these two young people going to share their father's exile. Nothing had ever appeared so touching to him. Then with what a smile he said to Nadia,

'Divine goodness! what joy will Mr. Korpanoff feel, when his eyes behold you, when his arms open to receive you! If I go to Irkutsk—and that appears very probable now—will you permit me to be present at that interview! You will, will you not?'

Then, striking his forehead,

'But I forgot, what grief too when he sees that his poor son is blind! Ah, everything is mingled in this world!'

However, the result of all this was that the kibitka went faster, and, according to Michael's calculations, now made ten to twelve versts an hour.

On the 28th of August our travellers passed the town of Balaisk, eighty versts from Krasnoïarsk, and on the 29th that of Ribinsk, forty versts from Balaisk.

The next day, five-and-thirty

versts beyond that, they arrived at Kamsk, a larger place, watered by the river of the same name, a little affluent of the Yeniseï, which rises in the Sayanok mountains. It is not an important town, its wooden houses picturesquely grouped round a square, but it is overlooked by the tall steeple of its cathedral, of which the gilded cross glitters in the sun.

Houses empty, church deserted. Not a relay to be found, not an inn inhabited. Not a horse in the stables. Not even a cat or a dog in the place. The orders of the Muscovite government had been executed with absolute strictness. All that could not be carried away had been destroyed.

On leaving Kamsk, Michael told Nadia and Nicholas that they would only find one small town of any importance, Nijni-Oudinsk, between that and Irkutsk. Nicholas replied that he knew there was a telegraph station in that town; therefore if Nijni-Oudinsk was abandoned like Kamsk, he would be obliged to seek some occupation in the capital of Eastern Siberia.

The kibitka could ford, without getting any damage, the little river which flows across the road beyond Kamsk. Between the Yeniseï and one of its great tributaries, the Angara, which waters Irkutsk, there was nothing to be feared from any stoppage caused by a river, unless it was the Dinka. But the journey would not be much delayed even by this.

From Kamsk to the next town was a long stage, nearly a hundred and thirty versts. It is needless to say that the regulation halts were observed, 'without which,' said Nicholas, 'they might have drawn upon themselves a just complaint on the part of the horse.' It had been agreed with the brave animal that he should

rest every fifteen versts; and when a contract is made, even with an animal, justice demands that the terms of it should be kept.

After crossing the little river Biriousa, the kibitka reached Biriousinsk on the morning of the 4th of September.

There, very fortunately, for Nicholas saw that his provisions were becoming exhausted, he found in an oven a dozen 'pogatchas,' a kind of cake prepared with sheep's fat and a large supply of plain boiled rice. This increase was very opportune, for something would soon have been needed to replace the koumyss with which the kibitka had been stored at Krasnoïarsk.

After a halt, the journey was continued in the afternoon. The distance to Irkutsk was not now more than five hundred versts. There was not a sign of the Tartar vanguard.

Michael Strogoff had some grounds for hoping that his journey would not be again delayed, and that in eight days, or at most ten, he would be in the presence of the Grand-Duke.

On leaving Biriousinsk a hare ran across the road, thirty feet in front of the kibitka.

'Ah!' exclaimed Nicholas.

'What is the matter, friend?' asked Michael quickly, like a blind man whom the least sound arouses.

'Did you not see . . .?' said Nicholas, whose bright face had become suddenly clouded. Then he added, 'Ah, no! you could not see, and it's lucky for you, little father!'

'But I saw nothing,' said Nadia.

'So much the better—so much the better! But I—I saw!'

'What was it then?' asked Michael.

'A hare crossing our road!' answered Nicholas.

In Russia, when a hare crosses the path of a traveller, the popular belief is that it is the sign of approaching evil.

Nicholas, superstitious like the greater number of Russians, had stopped the kibitka.

Michael understood his companion's hesitation, although he in no way shared his credulity as to hares passing, and he endeavoured to reassure him.

'There is nothing to fear, friend,' said he.

'Nothing for you, nor for her, I know, little father,' answered Nicholas; 'but for me. It is my fate,' he continued.

And he put his horse in motion again.

However, in spite of these forebodings the day passed without any accident.

At twelve o'clock the next day, the 6th of September, the kibitka halted in the village of Alsalevok, which was as deserted as all the surrounding country.

There, on a doorstep, Nadia found two of those strong-bladed knives used by Siberian hunters. She gave one to Michael, who concealed it among his clothes, and kept the other herself. They were now not more than seventy-five versts from Nijni-Oudinsk.

Nicholas had not recovered his usual spirits. The ill-omen had affected him more than could have been believed, and he who formerly was never half an hour without speaking, now fell into long reveries from which Nadia found it difficult to arouse him. His moody state may be accounted for when it is recollected that he was a man belonging to those northern races, whose superstitious ancestors have been the founders of the Hyperborean mythology.

On leaving Ekaterinburg, the Irkutsk road runs almost parallel

with the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, but from Biriousinsk it proceeds south-east, so as to slope across the hundredth meridian. It takes the shortest way to reach the Siberian capital by crossing the Sayansk mountains. These mountains are themselves but part of the great Altai chain, which are visible at a distance of two hundred versts.

The kibitka rolled swiftly along the road. Yes, swiftly! Nicholas no longer thought of being so careful of his horse, and was as anxious to arrive at his journey's end as Michael himself. Notwithstanding his fatalism, and though resigned, he would not believe himself in safety until within the walls of Irkutsk. Many Russians would have thought as he did, and more than one would have turned his horse and gone back again, after a hare had crossed his path.

However, some observations made by him, the justice of which was proved by Nadia transmitting them to Michael, made them fear that their trials were not over.

Though the land from Krasnoiarsk had been respected in its natural productions, its forests now bore traces of fire and steel; the fields on each side of the road had been devastated, and it was evident that some large body of men had passed that way.

Thirty versts before Nijni-Oudinsk the indications of recent devastation could not be mistaken, and it was impossible to attribute them to others than the Tartars.

Indeed, it was not only that the fields were trampled by horses' feet, and that trees were cut down, the few houses scattered along the road were not only empty, some had been partly demolished, others half burnt down. The marks of bullets could be seen on their walls.

Michael's anxiety may be imagined. He could no longer doubt that a party of Tartars had recently passed that way, and yet it was impossible that they could be the Emir's soldiers, for they could not have passed without being seen. But then who were these new invaders, and by what out-of-the-way path across the steppe had they been able to join the high-road to Irkutsk? With what new enemies was the Czar's courier now to meet?

Michael did not communicate his apprehensions either to Nicholas or Nadia, not wishing to make them uneasy. Besides, he had resolved to continue his way as long as no insurmountable obstacle stopped him. Later he would see what it was best to do.

During the ensuing day, the recent passage of a large body of foot and horse became more and more apparent. Smoke was seen above the horizon. The kibitka advanced cautiously. Several houses in deserted villages still burned, and they certainly could not have been set on fire more than four-and-twenty hours before.

At last, during the day of the 8th of September, the kibitka stopped suddenly. The horse refused to advance. Serko barked furiously.

'What is the matter?' asked Michael.

'A corpse!' replied Nicholas, who had leapt out of the kibitka.

The body was that of a moujik, horribly mutilated, and already cold.

Nicholas crossed himself. Then, aided by Michael, he carried the body to the side of the road. He would have liked to give it decent burial, that the wild beasts of the steppe might not feast on the miserable remains, but Michael could not allow him the time.

'Come, friend, come!' he ex-

claimed, 'we must not delay, even for an hour!'

And the kibitka was driven on.

Besides, if Nicholas had wished to render the last duties to all the dead bodies they were now to meet with on the Siberian high-road, he would have had enough to do! As they approached Nijni-Oudinsk, they were found by twenties stretched on the ground.

It was, however, necessary to follow this road, until it was manifestly impossible to do so longer without falling into the hands of the invaders. The road they were following could not be abandoned, and yet the signs of devastation and ruin increased at every village they passed through.

About four o'clock in the afternoon of this day, Nicholas caught sight of the tall steeples of the churches of Nijni-Oudinsk. Thick vapours, which could not be clouds, were floating around them.

Nicholas and Nadia looked and communicated the result of their observations to Michael. If, by some inexplicable manœuvre, the Tartars occupied the town, they must at every cost avoid the place.

'Advance cautiously,' said Michael, 'but advance!'

A verst was soon traversed.

'Those are not clouds; that is smoke!' exclaimed Nadia. 'Brother, they are burning the town!'

It was, indeed, only too plain. Flashes of light appeared in the midst of the vapour. It became thicker and thicker as it mounted upwards. There were no fugitives, however. The incendiaries had probably found the town deserted, and had set fire to it. But were they Tartars who had done this? They might be Russians obeying the orders of the Grand Duke. Had the government of the Czar determined that from Krasnoiarsk, from the Yeniseï, not a town, not

a village, should offer a refuge to the Emir's soldiers? What was Michael Strogoff to do—should he stop, or should he continue his journey?

He was undecided. However, having weighed the pros and cons, he thought that, whatever might be the difficulties of a journey across the steppes without a beaten path, he ought not to risk falling a second time into the hands of the Tartars. He was just proposing to Nicholas to leave the road, and, unless absolutely necessary, not resume it until Nijni-Oudinsk had been passed, when a shot was heard on their right. A ball whistled, and the horse of the kibitka fell dead, shot through the head.

At the same moment a dozen horsemen dashed forward, and the kibitka was surrounded.

Before they knew where they were, Michael, Nadia, and Nicholas were prisoners, and being dragged rapidly towards Nijni-Oudinsk.

Michael, in this second attack, had lost none of his presence of mind. Being unable to see his enemies, he had not thought of defending himself. Even had he possessed the use of his eyes, he would not have attempted it; the consequences would have been his death and that of his companions. But though he could not see, he could listen and understand what was said.

From their language he found that these soldiers were Tartars, and from their words that they preceded the invading army.

In short, what Michael learnt from the talk at the present moment, as well as from the scraps of conversation he overheard later, was this:

These men were not under the direct orders of the Emir, who was now detained beyond the Yeniseï. They made part of a third column,

chiefly composed of Tartars from the khanats of Khokand and Koondooz, with which Feofar's army was to effect a junction in the neighbourhood of Irkutsk.

By Ivan Ogareff's advice, and in order to assure the success of the invasion in the eastern provinces, this column, after crossing the frontier of the government of Semipalatinsk and passing to the south of Lake Balkhash, had skirted the base of the Altaï mountains. Pillaging and ravaging under the leadership of an officer of the Khan of Koondooz, it had reached the upper course of the Yeniseï. There, guessing what had been done at Krasnoïarsk by order of the Czar, and to facilitate the passage of the river to the Emir's troops, this officer had launched a flotilla of boats, which, either as barges or by affording materials for a bridge, would enable Feofar to cross and resume the road to Irkutsk. Having done this, it had descended the valley of the Yeniseï, and struck the road on a level with Alsalevsk. From this little town began the frightful course of ruin which forms the chief part of Tartar warfare. Nijni-Oudinsk had shared the common fate, and the Tartars, to the number of fifty thousand, had already quitted it to take up a position before Irkutsk. Before long they would be reinforced by the Emir's troops.

Such was the state of affairs at this date, most serious for this isolated part of Eastern Siberia, and for the comparatively few defenders of its capital.

All this Michael learnt. The arrival before Irkutsk of a third column of Tartars, and the approaching junction of the Emir and Ivan Ogareff with the bulk of their troops; consequently the investment of Irkutsk, and after that its surrender, would only be

an affair of time, perhaps of a very short time.

It can be imagined with what thoughts Michael's mind was now occupied. • Who could have been astonished had he, in his present situation, lost all hope and all courage? Nothing of the sort, however; his lips muttered no other words than these,

'I will get there!'

Half an hour after the attack of the Tartar horsemen Michael Strogoff, Nadia, and Nicholas entered Nijni-Oudinsk. The faithful dog followed them, though at a distance. They could not stay in the town, as it was in flames and about to be left by the last of the marauders.

The prisoners were therefore thrown on horses and hurried away: Nicholas resigned as usual; Nadia, her faith in Michael unshaken; and Michael himself, apparently indifferent, but ready to seize any opportunity of escaping.

The Tartars were not long in perceiving that one of their prisoners was blind, and their natural barbarity led them to make game of their unfortunate victim. They were travelling fast. Michael's horse, having no one to guide him, often started aside, and so made confusion among the ranks; this drew on his rider such abuse and brutality as wrung Nadia's heart, and filled Nicholas with indignation. But what could they do? They could not speak the Tartar language, and their assistance was mercifully refused.

Soon it occurred to these men, in a refinement of cruelty, to exchange the horse Michael was riding for one which was blind. The motive for the change was explained by a remark which Michael overheard,

'Perhaps that Russian can see, after all!'

Thus was passed sixty versts from Nijni-Oudinsk, through the villages of Tatan and Chibarlin-skœ. Michael had been placed on this horse, and the reins ironically put into his hand. Then, by dint of lashing, throwing stones, and shouting, the animal was urged into a gallop.

The horse, not being guided by his rider, blind as himself, sometimes ran into a tree, sometimes went quite off the road; in consequence, collisions and falls, which might have been extremely dangerous.

Michael did not complain; not a murmur escaped him. When his horse fell, he waited until it got up. It was, indeed, soon assisted up, and the cruel fun continued.

At sight of this wicked treatment, Nicholas could not contain himself; he endeavoured to go to his friend's aid. He was prevented and treated brutally.

This game would have been prolonged, to the Tartars' great amusement, had not a serious accident put an end to it.

On the 10th of September the blind horse ran away, and made straight for a pit, some thirty or forty feet deep, at the side of the road.

Nicholas tried to go after him; he was held back. The horse, having no guide, fell with his rider to the bottom of the cliff.

Nicholas and Nadia uttered a piercing cry. They believed that their unfortunate companion had been killed in the fall.

However, when they went to his assistance, it was found that Michael, having been able to throw himself out of the saddle, was unhurt; but the miserable horse had two legs broken, and was quite useless.

He was left there to die without being put out of his suffering,

and Michael, fastened to a Tartar's saddle, was obliged to follow the detachment on foot.

Even now not a protest, not a complaint. He marched with a rapid step, scarcely drawn by the cord which tied him. He was still 'the man of iron' of whom General Kissoff had spoken to the Czar.

The next day, the 11th of September, the detachment passed through the village of Chibarlin-skœ. Here an incident occurred which had serious consequences.

It was nightfall. The Tartar horsemen, having halted, were more or less intoxicated. They were about to start.

Nadia, who till then, by a miracle, had been respectfully treated by the soldiers, was insulted by one of them.

Michael could not see the insult, nor the insulter; but Nicholas saw for him.

Then quietly, without thinking, without perhaps knowing what he was doing, Nicholas walked straight up to the man, and before the latter could make the least movement to stop him, had seized a pistol from his holster, and discharged it full at his breast.

The officer in command of the detachment hastened up on hearing the report.

The soldiers would have cut the unfortunate Nicholas to pieces, but at a sign from their officer he was bound instead, placed across a horse, and the detachment galloped off.

The rope which fastened Michael, gnawed through by him, broke by the sudden start of the horse, and the half-tipsy rider galloped on without perceiving that his prisoner had escaped.

Michael and Nadia found themselves alone on the road.

(To be continued.)

THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHEPHERDESS.

WHEN his relations had driven off, Lieutenant Frank Wyatt took a cigar, and wandered round about the old place—into the yard, down the avenue, about the meadows, where pretty pale crocus-flowers carpeted the ground. Indian corn grew there too, with its long stalk and leaves, and the great head pushing its way upwards. The poplars rustled beside the river, the fish dived and darted along under the shadow of the weeds. The whole place lay perfectly still in the afternoon sun, like 'a haunt of ancient peace,' a silent sleepy Arcadia. Unless one is brought face to face with them by some personal experience, it is almost impossible to believe that these French country landscapes can be the scene in present times of war and revolution. Old feudal struggles there may have been; that old château on the hill may have sent out smoke and fire from the gun-holes in its walls; but all that was hundreds of years ago. Now the place lies open and secure, without even the protection of a single gate, from the entrance of the avenue to the terrace and the house-door. Yet within the memory of children Prussian soldiers have clattered down through the village of Sonnay-sous-Carillon, which lies close to Les Sapinières; and within the memory of men there have been burnings and revolutions; and those who live now confidently expect to see more of such things before they die.

Frank wandered about very

agreeably to himself. His artistic mind understood and enjoyed the beauty round him. Perhaps it needs as fine a faculty to see and appreciate this kind of beauty as to sit gazing in rapture at mountains or the sea. The poplars by the little river, with their silver stems and light leaves that shadowed and flickered and rustled with every softest breath of air; the blue clear sky shining through them; the slowly-running water, blue, silver, brown, green, in its gentle reflections; the meadows emerald green. Frank found several lovely subjects for sketches down here in the low ground, and also discovered a pretty view of the château, and another of the church-spire rising among trees. He had an idea, which I think shows that there was something in him of the true artist, that Nature in her every-day work is even more worth copying than in her grand efforts. Poets and wise men have said very truly that we miss the beauty that lies about our feet. It is true concerning more things than water and grass and trees; but as far as these went, at least, Frank was not one of the blind.

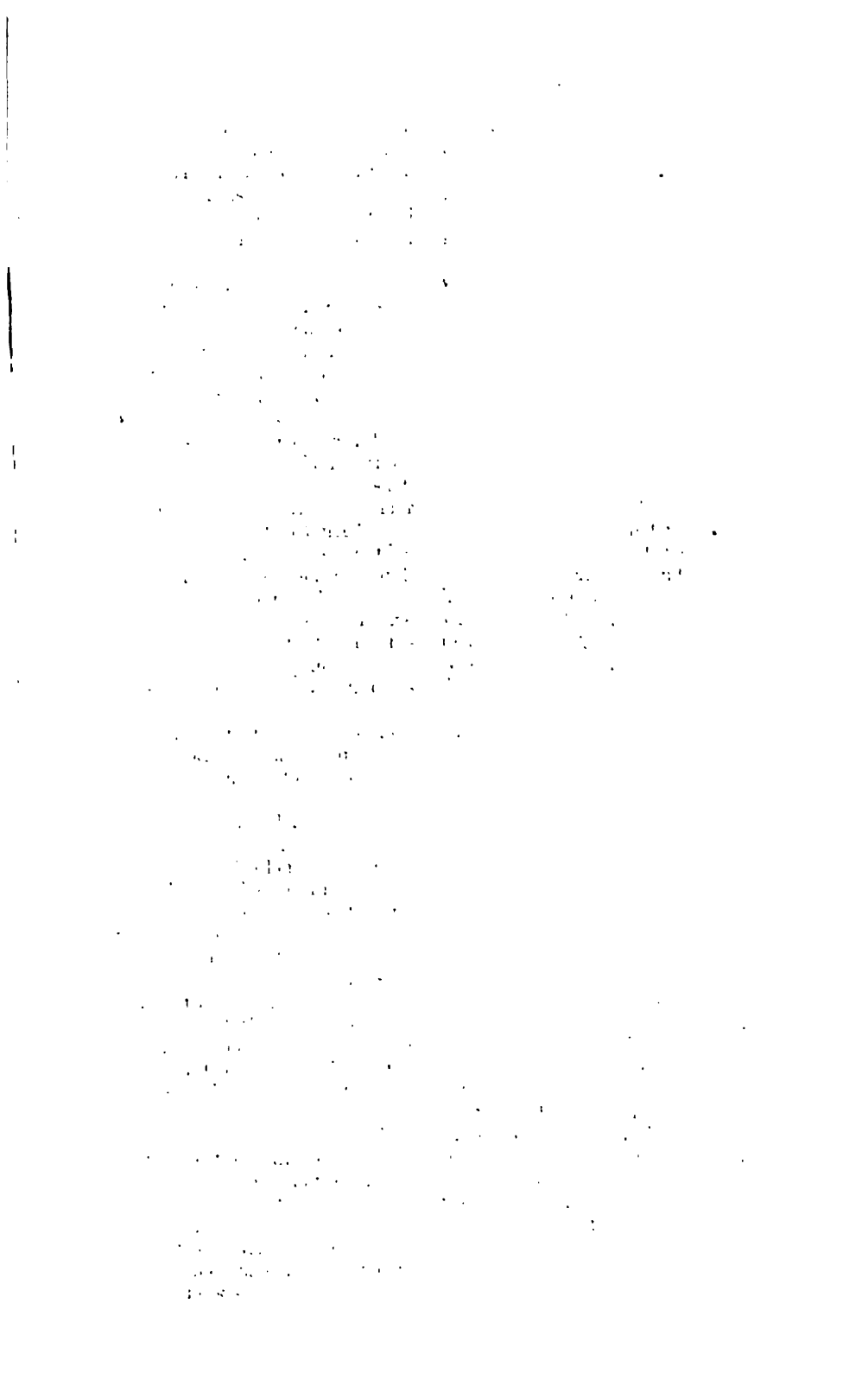
Presently he walked up into the meadow near the house, where the shepherdess had just brought her flock for their afternoon graze. This was not one of those bergères proper to Arcadia and the Muses, with a round straw hat and a crook. La Mère Chapin was a little withered old woman, active, upright, and shrewd, with a tight white cap, a short jacket and petticoat, bare brown legs like





‘The treasure, monsieur ! It lies where Monsieur le Baron and my poor uncle buried it.’

See ‘The Dreamland of Love,’





two sticks, and dark-brown worsted socks under her sabots. Her rough-haired dog was in attendance; and as she watched the sheep, she was hard at work all the time with her distaff and spindle.

'Bon jour, monsieur,' said she, with a laugh in her black eyes, as Frank, in his gray clothes, looking very fair and languid, came sauntering up the meadow.

'Bon jour,' said Frank, taking off his hat with a smile.

'Monsieur has recovered from his journey? Ah, dame! those railways are tiring enough in such weather as this. And monsieur came from a great distance.'

'From Paris, yesterday; but before that I came from England. That is a long journey.'

'England! Yes, indeed, I have heard the name of that place before. And the sheep in England, monsieur, are they as fine as these?'

'There are many different kinds,' said Frank, 'some larger, and some smaller. Where do these come from?'

When once La Chapin had started on the subject of her sheep, nothing could stop her. They were her children, her darlings. She ran on for some time about them, giving Frank, who was not learned in sheep, more information than he chose to show. As soon as he could get a word in, he began asking her about the place: had she lived there long in the service of Mme. la Comtesse? This was another of La Chapin's pet topics. She had lived at Sonnay all her life, and her parents before her. They were there all through the great Revolution; but monsieur must understand that they were good people in those times when all the world was wicked.

'Madame's family was not here then?' Frank suggested.

'Certainly not. M. le Baron de Sonnay and his wife and daughter—voilà tout. Ah, dame! ce pauvre monsieur, it was a terrible time for him. He sent the ladies out of the country, and remained himself at the château with his valet-de-chambre—and that was my uncle, Jean Pichard, my father's brother. But perhaps monsieur has heard the story?'

'No, never,' said Frank.

'M. le Baron was rich, and the best master and the best friend in the world. He had also great treasures of silver and gold, dishes and vases, spoons and forks, and all kinds of things that monsieur can imagine. Allons! he determined to hide all this, and in fact he and Jean Pichard buried the whole somewhere about the château. He wrote to madame his wife, and told her that he had done this. He said it was quite safe, for no one but himself and Pichard knew the place. Ah, it was safe indeed! A few weeks after, ce pauvre Monsieur le Baron was guillotined. And as if that was not enough, my uncle Pichard was shot by some wicked soldiers that passed through the place. So both of them died, and neither knew of the death of the other.'

'That was strange,' said Frank. 'And the treasure?'

'The treasure, monsieur! It lies where Monsieur le Baron and my poor uncle buried it.'

'And no one has searched for it?'

'Si,' said La Chapin, laughing. 'Everybody has searched for it, but nobody has found it. If Madame la Comtesse would take the advice of her servants, she would dig over the whole estate. But she does not trouble herself about it, any more than I do about the stones on the road yonder.'

'Who lived here after M. de Sonnay? Did his wife and daughter ever come back?'

'Never, monsieur. Their property was taken from them, ces pauvres dames, and they both died at some place a long way off. Julie Robert, the femme-de-chambre, came back here and told us that they were dead. I remember that myself. But the château was sold to a little farmer of the neighbourhood, un homme de rien, and he lived there, little miserable, till M. le Comte, the husband of madame, bought the place.'

'If the treasure was found, it would belong to madame,' Frank half soliloquised.

'Ah, dame! oui,' said the shepherdess, nodding her head violently.

'A couple of francs would not do her any harm, I suppose,' thought the young man; and he pulled them out accordingly.

La Chapin's gratitude was almost tearful; she promised to pray for him; and Frank, very well satisfied, wished her 'bon soir,' and walked off towards the house.

He waited for his friends on the terrace, but they did not arrive till nearly dinner-time; and at dinner they were full of Château Lauron and the De Valmonts.

'We have a great many neighbours in this country, and a very agreeable society,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire; 'but only two of these families still retain the property they had before the Revolution. Les Rochemar live still at the Château de Rochemar, and Lauron has always been one of the châteaux of the Valmont family. They lost the old Château de Valmont in Touraine; in fact, it was burnt to the ground, and the property was taken from them.'

'Are they rich?' said Agnes.

'Yes, they have a good property; but they have spent a great deal in restoring their château and other ways. M. de Valmont's father was an extravagant man, and lived a great deal in Paris. He thinks himself very prudent, for he has undertaken several strange things. He has a share in a shipbuilding firm at Brest, and in a great bank somewhere else.'

'I did not know that a French gentleman would ever have anything to do with such bourgeois concerns as those,' said Frank, laughing.

'M. de Valmont has many English ideas,' said the Comtesse. 'Not that he would ever go so far as some of your noblesse, who turn their sons into merchants, if what I hear is true: but he thinks that a man of his birth can do anything that is not sordid, without in the least affecting his position. You think him right, do you not?'

'Perfectly right,' said Frank.

'I thought he seemed to have a great deal of sense,' added Johnny.

'You may well say so. Ah, Frank, your brother has won all the De Valmont hearts. You ought to have been there; you have lost your chance. He kissed Mme. de Valmont's hand as if he had been born a Frenchman.'

'That was Johnny in a new light, certainly.'

'I couldn't help it,' said Johnny, in an undertone.

'Cécile thought him very gentle,' said Marie. 'She told me so.'

'I thought her very pretty—very beautiful,' said the sailor, with the slow quiet decision which always made his brother laugh.

'Yes, she is charming,' said Marie. 'I suppose her mother will soon marry her. Do you know, grand'mère?'

'At present there is nothing

beyond an idea,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'A young M. de Marillac has been proposed to her lately; but the affair will not be settled in any way till they go to Paris. He will have a large fortune, they say. But you must not say a word of this, my children.'

'It will be strange if little Cécile is married,' said Marie; 'only the other day she was a child. But I think she will love her husband and be very happy.'

Agnes watched Marie as she spoke, but could not discern any particular horror at the prospect of her own fate. Evidently her view was that one must be married, and as to loving one's husband, that was an additional blessing to be hoped for.

After having their coffee on the terrace, Mme. de Saint-Hilaire and Peloton were inclined for a turn in the moonlit avenue, and Frank walked off with them, leaving Johnny to entertain the two girls.

Frank had a talent for amusing and making friends with old ladies, which is sometimes a very amiable talent, but at other times has a decided background of selfishness. I do not wish, however, to judge him before the time, or to say that he did not walk after Mme. de Saint-Hilaire for her own sake. He told her about his doings in the afternoon, and alluded to the shepherdess's story of the buried treasure.

'La Chapin's favourite story,' said the Comtesse. 'Ah, yes, they want me to pull down the terrace, to undermine the house, to dig holes and burrow in all my fields—in fact, to spend the treasure before I find it. But I am not rich enough for those amusements.'

'Still it would be worth finding,' said Frank.

'That is very likely. But you have no idea how many stories of this kind there are in the country—legends of the Revolution. At any rate, it must remain hidden as long as I live. When the place goes to Marie she and her husband can do as they please.'

'I could not live here without certainty of some kind,' said Frank.

'You English are so curious, with your active minds and bodies,' laughed Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, her quick wits failing for once to follow the train of thought in her companion's mind. 'However, M. de Rochemar is already so rich that I think he will be contented with the estate, and what chance may bring him beyond it. He is of a quiet nature too, and would not care for the trouble of setting people to dig for a chimera.'

'And who may he be, this M. de Rochemar?' asked Frank rather wonderingly.

'Tiens! Nobody has told you? What silent young people these are! Your sister Agnes might have been brought up in a convent of Dames Carmelites. M. de Rochemar is Marie's fiancé.'

'Indeed! Has she been engaged to him long?'

'Since yesterday. His mother and I have arranged it for them. The Marquis himself is in Algeria with his regiment, but he is expected home soon.'

'They are acquainted, I suppose?' said Frank.

'They saw each other some years ago; but most of the acquaintance is yet to come. His mother is a friend of mine, and we have always known the family.'

Frank paused a minute, and then laughed.

'I hope it is a very happy arrangement for her,' he said. 'Your

marriages in France are a little startling, when one is not used to them.'

'It is very possible,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire; 'but in this case, I assure you, nothing could be happier.'

CHAPTER VII.

SETTING SUNS.

IN spite of buried treasures and mariages de convenance, these young English people managed to make themselves very happy in this French life, so delightfully different from their own at home. Everything was free, picturesque, and natural, and without the stiffness which so often spoils English country society. In that charming part of France, at this time of year especially, everybody is enjoying château-life, visiting friends without formality, riding, driving, dancing, shooting, taking walks in the beautiful valleys, sitting out at night in the clear, warm, dry air; dressing as one pleases, without any trouble of bonnets or kid-gloves.

Agnes Wyatt accommodated herself to all this very easily, left her new bonnet in its box, and bought some comfortable gants de Suède in the little town of Carillon—did her best, in fact, to turn herself into a Frenchwoman, and gained great credit from the neighbouring ladies for her pretty toilettes and nice attentive manners. Her brothers also became very popular; Frank, of course, without any effort of his own. Johnny brightened up wonderfully, partly from his intercourse with the De Valmont family, whom he thought the most delightful people he had ever met in his life. He might well think so, for Mme. de Valmont, who was a woman of the world, and knew

courts and their ways, paid him more amiable attention than she would ever have thought of bestowing on a young countryman of her own. Johnny was quietly devoted to her and her daughter, though he had not much to say to Mdlle. Cécile, who, like a French girl, withdrew herself and kept silence, listening to her mother's agreeable conversation with laughing eyes of fun and sympathy.

Marie de Saint-Hilaire, being older, was much more talkative, and in her small way shared the rule of house and village with her grandmother. She got her own way in things by showing little tempers whenever she was opposed, but she was generally very lively and amiable, though easily upset and annoyed, and inclined to be fussy. Her face in repose had always a tinge of sadness; perhaps this was owing to delicacy of health. But she was extremely charitable; the servants loved her, though she scolded them, and her kindnesses in the village were unnumbered. Of course her education had been most carefully looked after, and thus she had read very little of her native literature. Her ideas did not stray far beyond *La Femme Forte*, *La Femme Sainte*, *La Femme Chrétienne*, *Lives of the Saints*, Mme. Craven's books, and those wonderful exalted French biographies which seem to be written on purpose to keep young women like her in the right way. Of course she was also a passionate Legitimist, and would have given all she possessed to help on the Carlists to victory. But this enthusiasm of hers was not roused to action, and at present her chief interest was the establishment of two Sisters of Charity in the village—one to visit and nurse the sick, and the other to teach the children. She walked down

nearly every day, now generally taking Agnes with her, to the little house in the village street. There she went in and talked to the Sister in the midst of her small flock, made remarks on this and that little girl—the boys went to the communal school—then climbed the narrow staircase to the kitchen. Sœur Lucie, if she was there, would come forward in her black gown and great flapping cap, set chairs for the ladies, and give her report of the sick and old and needy, for whom she did all sorts of nice little cookeries on her small stove. Very often Marie and Agnes brought a basket of fruit with them from the château garden, which the Sister unpacked with her quick neat fingers, pleasantly smiling and chattering all the time. Agnes watched and listened, and thought it all very good, and sighed as she remembered English villages where there was no Sœur Lucie or anybody else to look after the poor, except those euphuistically called their ‘guardians.’

The fat old curé, with his honest face, went about the village, and beamed with benevolence on Marie when he met her. Just now a mutual anxiety bound all these people together. A dear little girl of eight years old was very ill; she had caught cold in harvest-time, and now seemed to be in a rapid consumption. Her name was Anaïs Robert. She was a saint, never known to be naughty, and what made her approaching death sad was that she was the only child of one of the greatest reprobates in Sonnay, a Republican, and a person altogether good for nothing. This child never ceased trying to convert her father, who listened to her and to no one else. Actually she had brought him once to church, just before she was

taken ill—a thing never accomplished by her mother, who, though a good Christian, was a poor weak woman. Agnes heard a great deal of talk about this little Anaïs, and one Sunday she saw a whole row of young girls, who sat on the front bench of the church, kneeling through part of the mass with their heads bent and scraps of lighted taper in their hands. One by one the tapers went out, and they rose from their knees.

‘Ah,’ said Marie afterwards, ‘they were praying for that poor little one. I am afraid she is dying.’

In the afternoon, after vespers, they heard that the child was dead, and Marie cried a little, not, as she explained to Agnes, for the happy young saint, but for ‘ce pauvre Robert,’ who would have no one now to bring him to church.

These things seemed to interest Marie a great deal more than her engagement to M. de Rochemar, though one afternoon her grandmother took her alone in the carriage to pay a visit to her future mother-in-law. They brought back an invitation from the Marquise for them all to dine with her one day in the following week. The De Valmonts were to be there too, and Mme. de Rochemar, who was fond of society, hoped to have some of her relations and friends staying at the château.

In the mean while the days passed on pleasantly at Les Sapinières. Frank, who had begun by being lazy and dawdling about the neighbourhood with his sketch-book, or reading in the high cushioned windows of the library, where he found a very fine collection of French books, took it into his head to teach Marie to ride. She was rather nervous, though not really afraid; so he

mounted her on the quiet old white mare who used to go shopping to Carillon, her maid Louise took the bridle, and away they went together about the lanes and woods and vineyards in those clear golden afternoons, Blanche stepping deliberately with the light little figure on her back, and Frank walking by the side, ready to guide her over any difficult place.

Johnny was away on his own concerns, or perhaps fast asleep somewhere, and Agnes was attending on her aunt as she walked about the farm and superintended her people. Nobody thought of interfering with Marie's doings; she was no longer a child, and the young Englishman was her cousin; and besides, her grandmother and every one else was accustomed to her independent ways.

A low wind rustled through the pine-woods that afternoon, bringing out their health-giving scent, making music in the upper branches, that sighed at its least breath. As that little cavalcade from the château turned into the wood, the stems were all glowing red in the sinking sunlight, and the carpet of purple heather glowed too, as if all the ground was blushing. They went along the soft path, across a corner of the wood, till they suddenly came out beyond it into a full view of the western sky, where the sun was slowly descending, and clouds of all shapes, sharply cut upon the clear background, some all red or gold, some dark with a gold edge, lay stretched along the sky. Down from their feet fell the steep slope of a vineyard, golden green; then there were masses of trees, with the bright thread of a river in the valley; then poplar-tops, all rosy, woods and slopes again, and a glimpse of distant country, through a break in the high

ground, fading away into a mist of glory.

Blanche pricked her ears, as Frank laid his hand on the bridle and stopped her in face of this view, just where the wood-path ended and the road through the vineyard began. Louise nodded and laughed, and turned back into the wood to gather a bunch of heather.

'Ah, that is pretty,' said Marie. 'I assure you that I never saw this before.'

'I am not very much astonished,' said Frank; 'but I am glad you like it. I never heard you admire nature before. What does this view make you think of?'

He stood stroking the mare's neck and looking up at Marie, with his back to the view. She brought her eyes from it, and met his, smiling and hesitating a little.

'But, Frank—I don't know,' she said. 'Paradise, perhaps; but that is not what you are thinking of.'

'No. The effect of a beautiful sight like this on me is always to make me think of what I love best in the world. If it is a long way off, so much the worse; it is nothing but a dream. If I can turn round and look at it, so much the better. What do you think of that?'

'Very pretty, only I am not sure that I understand you,' said Marie. But her eyes were gone back to the clouds, and Frank did not explain himself. Only he muttered under his breath, 'Tant mieux!'

'We don't care for the view after all, do we?' he said, in quite a different voice. 'At least I see that it takes your thoughts far enough away from here. Where are they gone, tell me? To Paradise, or to Algeria, or only as far as Rochemar?'

'You are very strange this evening,' said Marie, suddenly looking him straight in the face. 'Is that the way you talk in England?'

'Not at all. Forgive me,' said Frank. 'But certainly it is a roundabout way of talking, and I have to do something which is difficult to me, my dear cousin. You may not believe me, but it is very difficult. I have to offer you my best wishes on your engagement. Will you accept them?'

'Thank you,' said Marie gravely.

The congratulation had been oddly put, certainly, and at that moment, drooping a little over Blanche's mane, with her pensive eyes and pale face, she did not look as if any great happiness was shining before her. But she smiled again the next moment.

'You will see Mme. de Rochemar on Wednesday,' she said. 'She is so good to me. And the château is beautiful.'

Frank was half pleased and half angry with her for ignoring his foolish hints, but the pleasure was strongest, because at that stage he admired her the more for it.

'Beautifully done, little Marie,' he thought to himself; 'if you are a victim, you are a very brave one.'

He recovered himself, and asked a few questions about Rochemar.

Louise, presently returning, led Blanche on through the vineyard.

The sun was just setting, when, having made a round, they came down a lane shaded by walnut-trees into the yard of the château. As they passed the old farm-buildings he said, almost in spite of himself,

'Then you are going to be very happy. I may be quite sure of that!'

'How can I tell?' said Marie. 'You can ask me again in ten years.'

'Ah, is that it?' said Frank.

It always seemed to be his duty to amuse them in the salon in the evening, by reading or singing or talking. Marie generally sat near him, and laughingly corrected his French now and then; but that night she was rather silent, and wrapped up in an enormous piece of tapestry. Frank fetched *Les Feuilles d'Automne* from the library, and read 'Soleils Couchants' while she and Agnes worked. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, who did not care for poetry, at least for that kind, sat half asleep in one of the great fauteuils by the chimneypiece; and Johnny, half listening, and slowly turning over an illustrated history of the war, leaned his elbow on the table, and pushed his fingers through his curls. It was a grave quiet little group, with chairs drawn up in a circle round the shaded lamp in the middle of the great glittering shadowy room.

'Why don't you sing?' said Johnny, looking up when his brother stopped, and Marie's little dark head was still bent over her worsteds. 'One can't stand too much of that sort of thing. Mademoiselle, do put your great work away, and let us have the pleasure of hearing your voice. We have plenty of Frank at home.'

Marie raised her eyes slowly, and looked at Frank. He was leaning back with the book in his hand, murmuring something to himself.

'O, sur des ailes, dans les nues,
Laissez-moi fuir, laissez-moi fuir!
Loin des régions inconnues
C'est assez rêver et languir!'

'Come, old fellow, answer when you're looked at,' said Johnny; and Frank seemed to wake; he raised his eyes too, and smiled at Marie.

'Yes, let us have some music,'

he said. 'Agnes, you can play for Marie.'

'You must help me,' said Marie, as she rolled up her work.

'Yes, if you like.'

Agnes went and took her place at the piano, and Marie got into the corner between her and the wall, while Frank stayed outside, to superintend the music. They sang very charmingly together, all sorts of pretty chansons, which Marie had learnt from time to time, and her cousins caught up at once. There were 'Le Montagnard Emigré,' 'Sans Amour,' 'La Patrie des Hirondelles,' and many others, and then some Italian opera songs, which Mme. de Saint-Hilaire woke up and asked for. Marie stood against the wall in the corner, looking straight before her, sometimes moving her hands gently in time to the music, and singing like a bird, without trouble or effort, in a sweet clear voice.

'There, that is enough,' she said at last suddenly. 'This singing tires me to death. I would rather dance. What do you say, Agnes? Allons, grand-mère'—gliding out of her place, half kneeling before the Comtesse, and laying her hands on hers—'you are going to play us a polka, n'est-ce pas?'

'What! with my old fingers?' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'Certainly. Agnes, give up your place. Johnny, will you have the goodness to put those chairs on one side?'

Agnes thought she had never seen her little cousin in such high spirits; but she, like every one else, was quite ready to please her. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire played her polka with as much correctness and spirit as a girl of twenty, and followed it up with a valse and another polka. There was not much choice of partners,

but all these four were good dancers, and went spinning delightfully round and round the smooth floor. Marie danced the first two with Frank, and the last with Johnny, who did not enjoy the change.

'Agnes dances like a sensible English girl,' he said afterwards; 'but that little thing is just like an eel. She goes wriggling round and round, and it is as much as one can do to keep up with her.'

That night, when Agnes was leaning out of her window into the still glorious world outside, there was a gentle knock at the door, and Marie came in, with all her long black hair down.

'Are you looking at the stars?' she said, pulling a chair up to the window. 'You English are always looking at something. As for me, I have plenty to think of without setting suns and moons and clouds. Sit down, ma chère. I want to ask you a little question.'

'What is it, my child?' said Agnes, bending over her and kissing her forehead.

'Ah, it is very kind of you to embrace me, but you will perhaps be vexed at my question. Forgive me, but are you engaged?'

'No,' Agnes answered, a little gravely; not that she minded the question, but she was rather afraid of what might be coming next.

'Why not, I wonder?' said Marie. 'Ever since you came it has been a mystery to me why your mother has not married you long before this. You don't wish to marry, then?'

'I do not say that. I do not trouble myself or think much about it. If I met with any one I cared for, I suppose altogether a married life is the happiest—at least it ought to be.'

'Was any one ever proposed to you that you did not like?'

'Yes, once. He proposed himself, you know, in our English fashion.'

'And why did you not marry him? Was he ugly, disagreeable, poor?' asked Marie, with an appearance of great interest.

'No, none of those. He was rather good-looking, on the contrary; many people thought him very agreeable, and he had a large fortune.'

'Then, my dear, what can have been your reason?'

'I did not care for him.'

'And he was satisfied with that?'

'He was obliged to be satisfied,' said Agnes, smiling. 'He was not a man that I liked. From things I heard, I believe he was not a very good man,' she added, glad to find a reason that Marie could understand.

'Ah, that was something. That was your reason, no doubt. If he had been good, you would have married him?'

Agnes paused a moment. 'No, I should not.'

'Ma chère, you would not? But you are unreasonable. What could you expect?'

'Only one little thing, but that was quite enough. If I had loved him better than any one else in the world, I should not have asked whether he was handsome, or how much money he had, or any of those things. I should have married him for himself. Do you see?'

'Ah, those are your ideas,' said Marie. She was silent for a long time, leaning her head against her cousin's shoulder, and gazing out, in spite of herself, at the stars. 'Listen, Agnes,' she said, in a low plaintive voice; 'I don't understand what you mean by loving any one in that way.'

There is something frightening in it. I think they are often very bad people who love like that. Women run away from their husbands sometimes because they love somebody else like that—*n'est-ce pas?* It frightens me to think of it. I am sure it must be very bad.'

'Or very good,' said Agnes gently. 'The best and most beautiful thing in the world, if it is given to the right person.'

'I don't like it. It is too much—it is unreasonable,' said Marie. 'Look at me. I am going to be married to Louis de Rochemar. *Mon amie*, you do not suppose that I love him like that?'

'No, I suppose not. How should you? You know nothing of him. But perhaps you may, by and by.'

'It is possible. But no—I remember him too well to make a romance about him. But do you understand? We shall do very well without your tiresome love. If I loved any one, I should be always dying of jealousy. I can imagine nothing more ennuyant. But Louis is good, and amiable, and agreeable, and rich. He will give me all the money and everything else I want, and will let me do exactly as I please. I shall talk to him, and sing to him; and he will listen, and will tell me his affairs when he wants my advice. We shall be good friends, never interfere with each other, please ourselves, and be very happy. *Allons!* what do you say to that?'

'It does sound as if you would be very happy,' said Agnes.

'To be sure. I tell you I shall. I want nothing better. If he had been disagreeable, I should have told my grandmother that I would not be engaged to him. But every one praises him. So

good-night, and sleep well, my dear cousin. Do not spend the whole night in looking at those stupid stars.'

Marie got up, shook back her hair, kissed Agnes on both cheeks, and hurried away.

'What can the child have meant by talking to me in that way?' thought Agnes, when she was left alone. 'Something must have shaken her a little in her national ideas, and she must have wanted to reassure herself. Well, I suppose there are happy French marriages, and I hope hers may be one of them. Was it wrong of me to let her see that there are different ideas in the world? No, I think not. It is best that she should know all about it beforehand.'

CHAPTER VIII.

ROCHEMAR.

THE Château de Rochemar stood on high ground above the bank of a river, not a little stream like that at Sonnay, but one of the large tributaries of Madame Loire, flowing broad and clear and full of fish through the favoured country. It had been a strong castle, commanding the river approach to the town of Carillon, had stood sieges from the English, and had been taken and retaken in many feudal struggles. Through the great Revolution the family had remained there, the Marquis of those days being so dearly loved by all the neighbourhood that nothing could persuade people to rise against him; and altogether the red storm had not swept so fiercely over Anjou as over places more civilised and more in the world. The present Marquise would have defended her château, if she could, against the Germans; but as that

was impossible she received them politely, and so escaped with nothing worse than a clearance of most of her furniture and the suffering of every kind of discomfort while they remained there.

Frank Wyatt looked out of the carriage window as they drove up that evening, and saw the great white towers with their gray caps crowning the hill in the twilight, the rows of windows with Renaissance decorations, the arched gateway under which they entered the cour d'honneur.

'Here you see the home of Marie,' Mme. de Saint-Hilaire whispered to him, as they went into the hall. 'What do you think of it? Have I done well for the child?'

'It is quite magnificent,' said Frank. 'These people must be very rich.'

'Yes, indeed. And if you had seen all this after the Prussians left! Ah, I cannot tell you. The restoration is perfectly wonderful.'

'It must be,' said Frank. He glanced round at Marie, who was following with Agnes and Johnny.

She looked a little flushed and excited, and was pointing things out as they passed in her quick way—the inlaid furniture that seemed to match the beautiful floors, the handsome jardinières holding great shadowing ferns and tropical plants, the painted ceilings, the reflection of themselves in the tall mirrors as they went by. It was in one of these that she saw Frank turn round and look at her as she glided along, with her white train sweeping, and pink oleanders in her hair, a delicate, sylph-like little figure in the great bright salle. She turned away from the glass and looked at him, smiling in a sort of triumph, as much as to say, 'Is not this worth having?' If she could have understood his answer, it would

certainly have been, 'Well, if you think so. But you can't have everything. For instance, would M. de Rochemar appear to very great advantage in that mirror? Might it not be better to be proud of your husband than of his house?'

The salon into which they went was furnished in Louis Quinze style, with beautiful old white flowery brocade on the white-and-gold chairs. Mme. de Rochemar, very handsomely dressed in pale lilac satin, came forward to meet them, and bowed in the most gracious manner to the young English people. Her friends who were in the room came up and talked to them—M. and Mme. de l'Allier, and 'les petits de Rochemar,' two nice-looking lads of eighteen and twenty. M. de l'Allier was gray and stiff-looking, and had not much to say; his wife was fat, handsome, and agreeable. She began at once talking English to Agnes. Mme. de Rochemar, in the mean while, sat down between Marie and her grandmother, and talked as fast as possible, waving her hands, and throwing her fan backwards and forwards. Frank, as he stood by, heard compliments flying in showers. Down came the light touch of Mme. de Rochemar's fingers on Marie's sleeve.

'Ma chère petite, quelle jolie toilette! Mais c'est ravissante! You have perfect taste. And those pretty flowers in your hair, the very things to suit you best. Ah, how charmed I am to have you here beside me—n'est-ce pas, madame? And your English cousins—it must be very interesting to have them with you. They are charming, no doubt. I have scarcely spoken to them. Monsieur!'

'Come here, Frank,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'You are pleased with France, I hope, monsieur?'

'Madame,' said Frank, 'it is the most charming country I ever was in.'

This was a very good beginning. Mme. de Rochemar was a thorough and devoted Frenchwoman, and her face lighted up at once with pleasure. So the cross-fire of compliments went on, at which Frank could have laughed heartily if he had not been engaged in it. The Marquise, Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, Marie, himself, each received a large share, and the Englishman was not at all behind-hand in paying them. But this game did not last long, for some other guests were announced, and Frank drew back as Mme. de Rochemar got up to receive them. She found time for an aside to Mme. de Saint-Hilaire: 'Heavens! how handsome he is!'

'Did I tell you?' said the Comtesse, nodding.

'And so well brought up! Charmant, charmant!'

She went forward with a smiling face to receive Mme. de Valmont, who was followed into the room by her husband, her daughter, and eldest son. These ladies were rather plainly dressed, the Marquise in black silk, and her daughter in soft white muslin; but velvet, satin, diamonds, all the milliners and jewellers in Paris could not have made them look handsomer or more distinguished: so thought Johnny Wyatt, at least, as with suddenly awakened eyes he saw them come into the room. When Mlle. de Valmont sat down near her mother, a little outside the grand circle into which everybody seemed to be forming themselves, he moved quietly round and placed himself at the back of her chair. She turned round, smiling, to shake hands with him; and then Mme. de Valmont suddenly looked up and saw him, and stretched out her hand too.

'Pardon! Where were you hiding yourself? I did not see you before.'

Presently she beckoned him close to her, and asked who that young man was, standing near Mme. de Rochemar.

'That is my brother,' said Johnny.

'Your brother! Indeed! Then there is no resemblance.'

'None at all,' said Johnny, half amused, with a quaint disconsolate tone in his voice.

'At any rate it is not a subject for grief,' said Mme. de Valmont.

'It is very kind of you to say so, madame.'

'Mamma always speaks the truth,' said Cécile.

'Yes, always,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'I find it much too tiresome to pay compliments that I don't mean.'

Just then there was a voice at the door.

'Mme. la Marquise est servie,' and young Léon de Rochemar, in his elder brother's absence, came forward, and gave his arm to Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, according to the good French fashion which puts age before rank.

Johnny found himself falling in with Mdlle. de Valmont, and they sat together at one end of the table. The young Frenchmen were rather silent in the presence of their elders, but Johnny did not think it necessary to follow their example, and tried to amuse his neighbour as well as he could. Frank looked at him now and then from his place between Mme. de l'Allier and Marie, and wondered how the dreamy, absent, unintellectual sailor could bring such bright looks of interest and amusement into the very handsome but still countenance of the girl beside him. Johnny's quiet way of devoting himself to one person—never thinking of the rest of

the world, but abounding in attentions to that one, with a certain frankness and downrightness which came across the conventionalities of tired landsfolk like a fresh breeze from the sea—was much more attractive than a person of Frank's character could understand. Probably Johnny was talking nonsense in bad French; but whatever it was, Mdlle. Cécile evidently liked it, and responded with so much spirit that M. de l'Allier remarked in an undertone to her mother,

'But mademoiselle votre fille is beautiful, she is brilliant. And how she resembles you!'

Mme. de Valmont looked down the table, and thought, perhaps, M. de l'Allier had meant that remark on Cécile's brilliancy as a note of warning. But she did not feel that it was necessary; she had an instinctive confidence in the young sailor, and a well-grounded one in her daughter, as having that dutiful tractable temper, that clear innocence, and that gentleness, only to be found in a really noble character. So she turned again, smiling, to M. de l'Allier, and began to tell him the origin of their acquaintance with Johnny.

'Indeed! a brave young fellow,' said her neighbour, considerably stroking his gray moustache. 'He has a right to a smile from mademoiselle. But his brother has the advantage in looks.'

'Do you think so?' said Mme. de Valmont. 'Certainly he is handsome, but I prefer the character of the other.'

Then, for a moment, as she looked in Frank's direction, something seemed to strike her. He was speaking to Marie, and in the girl's face as she listened there was a curious excitement, a nervousness that flushed her cheeks and wrinkled her forehead into

distressed lines, while she kept her eyes down and would not look at her cousin as she answered him. One moment, Mme. de Valmont felt extreme surprise; the next, she almost thought she had been mistaken, for Marie had entirely recovered her usual expression, and was laughing at some witty remark of Mme. de l'Allier's.

This lady's four children came in at dessert—the little girls with long curls and embroidered frocks; the boys with long white coats, white boots, large blue bows at their necks, and hair brushed up in a crest. Not long after everybody went back, arm in arm, to the salon, where the little boys walked about under Mme. de Rochemar's direction with the coffee-cups, and people's chief business was talking to the children and admiring them. Presently, when the gentlemen were gone away to the smoking-room and the children had disappeared, Mme. de Rochemar sat down among her friends and began telling ghost-stories.

Agnes Wyatt, as she listened and looked on, thought the little lady was a comedy in herself; her wonderful gesticulations, noddings, wavings, flourishes of her large fan, pats with her foot upon the floor, and her face of half-terrified enjoyment, gave double effect to the stories she told. At Rochemar they had a crusader, who was heard rattling his armour inside the walls whenever any danger drew near any member of the family. He had even appeared once in bodily form to the Marquis Charles de Rochemar, in the time of Louis Quinze, and had warned him that in a year he would either have died or have gained great honour.

'Well, as to that, he did both, for he was killed in the storming of Kehl.'

As Agnes listened to the talk of these ladies, she became aware that there was not a *château*, or village, or even an old bridge in the neighbourhood without its ghost, or legend, or tradition. Some of them had to do with saints, some with old battles, and very many with the Revolution, which seemed to have passed over the country like a black thunder-cloud, leaving ruin behind it; and yet this part of France had suffered little in comparison.

'Cécile,' said Marie, in a low voice, going up to Mdle. de Valmont, 'shall we go out on the terrace?' And the two girls went out accordingly through a window into the warm still night outside, lighted up by thousands of stars, the Milky Way flowing like a stream of silver across the sky.

The great terrace at Rochemar looked down from its height on flower-gardens sloping to the river; another sky of stars lay twinkling and trembling on the polished blackness. The night air was full of the scent of some flowers that were hidden in the dark under the terrace-wall. Many a lady in bygone days had walked out upon that terrace, leaving behind her the heavy towers, which in their great white strength looked as if they might be—what no doubt they often were—a living tomb. Few more graceful examples of young French womanhood had ever walked there than these two in their white dresses, as they came out of the bright salon, and moved across to the balustrade, looking down on the river and the dim starlit country beyond.

'Dear little Marie,' said Cécile, in the fulness of her kind heart, 'I do congratulate you. How happy you will be, with this beautiful *château*, and everything you can wish for in the world!'

'Do not you think it was very

wise of me to say yes?' said Marie.

'Yes, certainly. You could not have refused. Shall you be much in Paris? Ah, what a pleasure it will be to meet there! And do you know when M. de Rochemar returns?'

'Mon Dieu, non!' said Marie impatiently; 'how should I know? I am not yet his wife, my dear!'

'You must be very anxious to see him.'

'Yes, and no. I know it all must come one of these days, and I assure you I am in no hurry. You see I have waited so long that I have grown quite used to living at Les Sapinières, and amusing myself there in my own way. It is strange enough that M. de Rochemar has had this in his head for years—ever since I was almost a child, and he was going abroad for the first time.'

'Ah, that is quite beautiful. And you did not see him when he came back four years ago?'

'No, I was very ill then. We were at Nice, and every one thought I should either die, or only live to join some order. The changes of this world are amusing enough. Here I am going to be married. Did you see him then? Tell me, is he very ugly?'

'No,' said Cécile, with a shade of hesitation.

'Voyons donc! As ugly as my cousin Johnny?'

'There is not a shade of likeness. M. de Rochemar is very dark, with black eyes, very like a soldier. But you do not call your cousin ugly? He has such beautiful eyes.'

Marie laughed, and then, laying her hand with a sudden movement on Cécile's, she whispered,

'Yes, I do call him ugly. This is what I call handsome.'

Her manner, even more than her words, startled Cécile's calm

simplicity in a disagreeable way. The next moment Frank Wyatt came up to them, tall, graceful, and looking quite like a paladin in the starlight.

'You must be cold, *ma cousine*,' he said to Marie. 'Ought you to be out here? Yes, it is very beautiful; but so is the salon in another way, and *Mme. de Rochemar* is asking for some music. Do you sing, *mademoiselle*?' turning to Cécile.

'No, I do not,' she answered gravely; and then, hardly understanding her own feelings, she walked away at once towards the window.

Frank took Marie's hand, and drew it into his arm as they followed her.

Mme. de Rochemar, whose eldest son's absence often made her feel as melancholy as any one of her cheerful nature possibly could be, thought and said that for years she had not enjoyed such a delightful evening as this. She had always wished to know something of the English; and this young man was perfect, set off by the very much quieter manners and appearance of his sister and brother. His figure, face, and voice were without fault, and she was unprejudiced enough to wish that her sons would take example by his correct and graceful manners. Still, of course, he was a minor attraction to her dear Marie, who was looking so well, so pretty, with that refined face and charming little figure, and who had learnt by inspiration to mingle with her natural gentleness the ease and *savoir faire* of a young lady who had seen the world. As the evening went on, she beckoned M. de l'Allier to her in a corner, and asked him what he thought of her future daughter-in-law.

'A most charming little person, indeed,' said M. de l'Allier. 'Mon-

sieur Louis is very fortunate. Mademoiselle is exactly the style that I admire. She is like some graceful flower, fragile perhaps, but delicately beautiful. Certainly there is no one in this country to approach her. I assure you, as she entered the room this evening, I said to myself, "Here is the Flower of Anjou!"

'Cher monsieur, you are too amiable,' said Mme. de Roche-mar, looking perfectly delighted, and clapping her hands gently. To have extorted such a compliment as this from any one so stiff and unimpressible was indeed a triumph. "'The Flower of Anjou!'" the Marquise repeated. 'Beautiful—charming! Pardon! I must really tell that to Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. Not in Mme. de Valmont's hearing; but she is occupied with the English demoiselle. The "Flower of Anjou!" Allons, you are a poet. I shall tell Louis in my next letter; and I assure you that our angel shall not lose the name.'

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE IN ARCADIA.

'You seem very fond of the society of the ladies,' said Johnny Wyatt, coming into the salon one day before breakfast, and finding his brother on a sofa in a shady corner. 'I have been talking to the Maire, and we are going out shooting together presently. You had better come too.'

'I think not,' said Frank.

'Why not? The old boy is great fun. When I asked him if he liked shooting, he gave himself a tremendous smite, and shouted out, "*Avec moi la chasse est une passion!*" Auguste has got a gun that he's going to lend me. The Maire takes him out sometimes.'

'Perhaps so. But the Maire is not going to take me,' said Frank, which silenced Johnny for the moment.

The Maire of Sonnay was a very respectable and well-thinking person, a retired tradesman of Carillon, who had built himself a smart little house on the other side of the valley, where he had gardens and plenty of glass, and cultivated very fine flowers and fruit. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, who liked to be on the best of terms with her neighbours, had given this worthy man permission to shoot over her estate, reserving to herself the power of killing any game she wanted whenever she pleased. Johnny had made friends with the Maire, as he had by this time with all the people about the place, thus providing himself with plenty of amusement. He had a hand in everything that went on. They were just beginning to beat down the walnuts, and he was to be found with a long stick near the top of the tree. The river was an unfailing interest—what with bathing, fishing, or clearing out the weeds preparatory to catching a desperate pike that lurked there. Half a dozen men were busy there, some pulling away the long reeds and water-plants that would straggle across the stream, some beating the water with poles, one walking along in the middle of the river with a net pushed before him. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire stood looking on at the failure of all these people to entrap Monsieur le Brochet. Nobody would venture into a certain dark hole close to the bridge, till Johnny took a net that was lying on the bank, dropped quietly in, and, after remaining some minutes up to his neck in water, brought out the pike in triumph. This odd boy had also a taste for cooking; he made great friends with

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire's cook, studied coffee-making and other mysteries, and gave her some wrinkles that he had picked up in his different voyages. All these things were done without any talking, and with an air of quiet indifference. When Johnny wished to make friends with anybody, he let his eyes speak for him, in a manner quite remarkable for a person so really unaffected.

'You can't be well, old fellow,' he said, with a sailor's kindness, as he stood by the table, with a sun-ray falling straight in on his hair, and looked at his pale brother lounging in the corner.

'Yes, I am,' said Frank civilly enough. 'But I don't care to go out in this broiling sun, unless it is to sit still somewhere. There's nothing to pity me for. I find it pleasanter here, and I must say I never was in a country better arranged for pleasing oneself.'

'That's true,' said Johnny. 'Well, I'm glad you are contented. You seem to be quite first fiddle with little Miss Marie. Do you like her?'

'Of course. She is the prettiest and most ladylike little thing you or I ever saw. Thoroughbred to the tips of her fingers. Look at her nails. One don't meet girls like that often in England.'

Johnny looked on the floor and whistled. It never entered into his head to argue with his brother; that would have been both troublesome and useless, however he might disagree with him. But it happened that Marie was both pretty and ladylike. That did not interfere with the fact that somebody else was beautiful and noble.

'I am very sorry for her,' Frank went on. 'How these people manage to stunt and narrow their

girls' minds is a wonder to me. But I think Marie is already beginning to see her way out, though one has to show it very carefully to these devout people. It is not much use, though, when there is that dreadful marriage before her. But after all, a little development can only do her good.'

'How do you set about it?' said Johnny dreamily. 'I say, Frank, what a pity we did not get here a few days sooner! You might have had a chance against that Marquis, so far off as he is.'

'O, I don't know,' said Frank. 'Transplanting seldom answers well. Besides, the grandmother would never have listened to it. Think of my quarters and Rochemar—my income and the Marquis's.'

'Do these people think so much about money and all that? One being richer than another seems to make no difference in the society here.'

'Are any of them poor?' retorted Frank. 'Certainly they are all on a level, and birth is everything, and there is none of the snobbish purse-pride we have in England. But at the same time do you suppose that their dignity would allow any of these girls to marry beneath them? It is the same with the men. There must be tolerably equal advantages on both sides.'

'Ah, I suppose so,' said Johnny. 'And they are all so well brought up that the notion of anything else never occurs to them.'

'Of course not. They might just as well, or better, think of marrying the Great Mogul as a stray Englishman without a big house and an estate at his back. They quite see the gulf between them and us. As for crossing it—why, they have never learnt to swim. So you see, Johnny, they feel as safe with you and me as

with their grandfathers. And we may make ourselves as happy as we can with them.'

'Things do happen, though,' said Johnny. 'I've read in books—'

'Only among the Bohemian sort,' said Frank consolingly. 'Not in Catholic, Legitimist, noble, well-regulated families. Their young ladies are shut up in brass towers, like the princess in the fairy-tale.'

'But those princesses always got out somehow.'

'Don't flatter yourself. You saved her life, and she is certainly handsome, but perfectly immovable. A young Gorgon. I thought of Medusa when I looked at her. You might as well try to run away with Le Mans cathedral.'

'Run away! Who talks of running away?' exclaimed Johnny indignantly, his face becoming redder. 'I'll be hanged if I understand you. I don't know what you mean by talking about Gorgons.'

'Nothing at all,' answered Frank very peaceably. 'And we shall all be much wiser if we stay where we are—for the present at least.'

The breakfast-bell began to ring, and Mme. de Saint-Hilaire's tall figure came walking past the windows, with her poodle following behind. Johnny left his brother, and went out to wish her good-morning.

Of course he said no more to Frank about the shooting; but went off, after breakfast, to join M. Lafon, leaving the others to amuse themselves as they liked. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire asked them if they would drive with her to Carillon, where she wanted to do some shopping, and in the mean while went to give some orders to her people.

Agnes took a parasol from the hall, and went after her across the yard, where she was standing, a picturesque figure, in the low dark archway of the farm-kitchen. Here the people were at dinner, the men in their blue blouses at a long table, and three or four women scattered about in the corners and at the windows, eating soup with an abundance of cabbage, and drinking the red wine of the country. Agnes thought Frank might have made a study of that kitchen, with the sun pouring in through the opposite windows, streaming across the stone floor, lighting up the grave Angevin faces, the snowy caps, the brown pitchers on the table, and the great bowls from which they helped themselves. She often came and peeped in at them; for this was her aunt's favourite time for giving orders, when she could find them and speak to them all together. Agnes was fast losing herself in a sort of dreamy peace in this Arcadia, where none of the disturbing elements of life seemed to enter. Everything was harmonious, gentle, graceful, and picturesque. Peasants and animals worked hard, but were placid and contented all the time. Nobody rebelled but the big black ox, Erèbe, who did not like his first experience of ploughing, but was growing more manageable every day. The sun shone, and the fruits ripened, the vintage was approaching, the walnuts were being gathered, all through these soft September days. And to remind the people that there is another world beyond this, the *Angelus* bell rang out at sunrise, noon, and sunset; the hills and the château echoed it back. Agnes began to listen for it, and to feel that she would miss it when she went away.

(To be continued.)

ST. VALENTINE'S LOTTERY.

In Two Drawings.

I.

THE FIRST DRAWING.

EARLY days for sketching out of doors. Mid February does not generally in our climate offer much temptation to the landscape-painter to take the field. But Frank Hilary was young, strong, and enthusiastic, full of determination, and ready to brave all the vicissitudes of the artist's career, bad weather included.

But the weather was not bad on the occasion when we first make his acquaintance, as he sits quietly working at a water-colour drawing of some grand pollard oaks—quite the contrary, for the sky and the temperature on this present 14th of February, A.D. 1870, was suggestive rather of midsummer. It was one of those sudden bursts of spring-promise with which we are sometimes favoured, only, as it would seem, to emphasise the rigours of the March and April that are to follow.

The woods were alive with song, the feathered choristers availing themselves to the utmost, everywhere, of the encouragement the sun was giving to their love-making. True, the trees were bare, freezingly bare, with an uncanny skeleton-like look about them, whilst the dense masses of ever-green shrubbery which somehow had got itself mixed up with the brambles and soddened bracken on the skirts of the oak copse which Hilary was sketching, brought into strong relief, here and there, the silvery boles and rugged gnarled trunks of the forest monarchs. The

timid crocus and primrose peeped out now and again from amongst the weltering heaps of last autumn's russet leaves, and even massed themselves as unmistakable patches of colour along the ridge of broken gravelly bank which, amphitheatre-like, made an uncommonly snug nook for the painter.

It was a singularly sheltered and sequestered spot, and sitting there so quietly as he did, the very squirrels came down from their trees, and the rabbits from their burrows, to within arm's length of him before they saw him. It was altogether a paradise of a place for a painter, whilst the fine foreground of gnarled timber, the wide stretch of park, the peep of blue distance, and the gabled roofs, twisted chimneys, and ivy-clad turrets of Croyston Towers made up a subject which must have struck even the most indifferent.

Frank Hilary had found his way hither from Hadenham, a house three miles off, where he was staying whilst painting the portrait of a favourite child, one of several daughters of a Mr. Hughes, the owner of the place. He had nearly completed it, and would probably have returned to London without so much as catching a glimpse of Croyston Towers, had not the sudden illness of the little girl prevented her from sitting to him for two or three days. But as the picturesque fame of the neighbouring old mansion was proverbial, Hilary availed himself of the fine weather and his unlooked-for leisure to walk over and possibly make a sketch of the celebrated Tudor mansion.

He had approached to within a quarter of a mile of it by a path across the park, when he suddenly came upon the oak-trees and the composition they made with the distant view of the house. Halting within the little amphitheatre of broken bank where we find him sitting, he exclaimed, 'Whew! how hot it is! it's like June! I can walk no farther; this subject is good enough for me;' and he went to work accordingly.

It was about ten o'clock A.M. when he first opened his camp-stool, and for two hours he remained completely absorbed and undisturbed. Looking up at last, towards the left, where the ever-greens trended away in a sort of wilderness until they reached the shrubbery and gardens of the mansion, what was his surprise to see a young lady sitting within some thirty yards of him, also sketching. Her profile was towards him, and it was very evident to him, after a few minutes' contemplation, that she, like the squirrels and rabbits, had come to these close quarters quite unconscious of his presence. Moreover, from the general lay of the land, the bank, and the shrubs, his ambush was pretty nearly complete. He had a perfect view of her, but unless she were to advance a few paces, and then look straight back into his little amphitheatre, she probably could not see him at all. She made a striking figure, one not likely to be overlooked by an artist.

'How charmingly she comes there!' said Frank to himself. 'By Jove, I must make a line or two of her. What luck! why, if one had wanted a figure to fit, here it is—colour perfect, form exquisite!'

With rapid strokes the skilled hand soon produced an unmistakable presentment, slight at first, but growing by degrees into a vivid

reproduction. The soft woollen dress of a lovely olive-gray green, with collar and cuffs of dark fur, contrasted well with the rich golden twists of hair kept natively in their place by a knot of deep-crimson ribbon shining out quite brilliantly under the shady black hat covered with nestling feathers, whilst the slightest peep of a crimson petticoat carried the warm tone artistically through the composition. As one by one such details were completed, the artist's enthusiasm and admiration increased. When she moved slightly, he paused in an agony lest the pose should be irremediably altered. When she turned her head, he winced lest she might see him, and so take flight abashed; but within an hour and a half he had managed to complete a most attractive sketch in water-colour, perfectly unmistakable in its likeness. The delicate piquant profile even had been caught, and was as like as all the rest, notwithstanding the distance betwixt artist and sitter; for Frank's clear blue eye was far-reaching and penetrating.

One o'clock rung out from the turret of Croyston Towers. The young lady rose hastily, gathered her traps together, and hurried away through the wilderness towards the house.

'What a nuisance!' cried Frank aloud; 'I only wanted about another half-hour, and I could have finished it thoroughly—well, never mind. I'll come over again to-morrow, and very likely she will come too; she is an enthusiast evidently, dear little creature, from the way she stuck to her work; amateurs generally are. I wonder who she is?'

Then Frank went on with his oak-trees through the remainder of the lovely afternoon, and came again the next day, as he said, to finish them; it could not have been for any other purpose, of course;

but somehow he could not finish them; circumstances were just as propitious for work, and the weather was equally fine, but nevertheless he could not settle to it. Instead of looking at his subject, he was for ever turning his head to the left, towards that shrubbery of a wilderness, as if he expected something besides bushes to appear there. Nothing else, however, was visible throughout the whole day; and it became quite evident to the least interested in such matters that the oak-trees would still require one more day's work. His host saw this plainly; and as the little sitter was not yet quite well, there was no difficulty on that head; so, for the third time, Hilary went to his oak-trees, and then he finished them; but he had no chance of finishing that other drawing—'she' never appeared again.

'What is the name of the family at Croyston Towers?' asked Frank casually of Mr. Hughes at dinner that evening.

'Belport is the family name,' was the answer; 'but there is only old Lady Belport living there now, the dowager. Croyston is made to do duty for the Dower House.'

'There is not much life, then, going on there now, I suppose?' said Frank.

'O dear, no; only people who go over to look at the place, or, like yourself, to make a sketch of it; it's a favourite subject with artists, as you know.'

'Yes, in the summer; there are plenty of them then, no doubt, but not at this time of the year, of course,' went on Frank.

'By no means; I have seen people sketching there in the depth of winter,' replied the host.

'H'm,' thought Hilary, 'she couldn't have been staying in the house then. I wonder who she was, and where she came from?'

Surely if he had wanted to know

so very much, he might have shown the sketch of the young lady in the wilderness to Mr. Hughes, who, being a local magnate, might have been able to tell him who she was. But he did nothing of the kind, and he returned to London without making an effort, as it seemed, to find out; but then everybody knows that artists are very odd inconsequent fellows about some things.

II.

THE SECOND DRAWING.

'CONGRATULATE you on your picture, Hilary!—it's the best bit of landscape I've seen of yours; and that figure of the girl sketching is charming.'

'Glad you like it. It's not much in my line, landscape—and Croyston Towers is such a hackneyed subject that I hardly know how I came to paint it; but I saw it this winter, during some wonderfully fine weather, and I thought it looked new rather, and I have made a good deal of the figure, as you see.'

'Yes; and very, very charming it is—delightful feeling about it; very nice, indeed, old fellow!—rather a pity you didn't paint it larger.'

'Hadn't time.'

'However, they have given it a first-rate place; you are sure to sell it.'

Now the first-rate place in question was a conspicuous spot on the line in the water-colour room of the Royal Academy Exhibition; and the occasion when Frank Hilary received the above and many more congratulatory criticisms from his friends was the varnishing day, just prior to the opening. The rooms were crowded with the brethren of the brush, chatting and commenting, dusting and touching

up their works, as they are privileged to do at such times, undisturbed by the outer world.

Just as the last words of Frank's friend fell from his lips, the two painters were joined by several others.

'Who is the lady, Hilary?' cries one; 'she's deuced nice! Evidently a likeness, old man?'

'Yes, it is a likeness, I am bound to say; and she comes pretty well there, I think.'

'Ah, you knew her, you rascal, and got her to sit.'

'Not at all; but you fellows want to know too much. It doesn't matter to you who she is if you like the result; that's sufficient, isn't it?' said Hilary, biting his lip.

'Well,' chimed in yet another brother of the brush who here came up, 'if he won't let on about his model, we know where to go for the model of an artist!'

'What do you mean?' said Hilary.

'O, I like that! You don't mean to say you don't know what I mean?'

'I'll swear I don't!'

'What! haven't you seen your likeness? Will you tell me you haven't been sitting to somebody?'

'No, on my word!'

'Well, then, it's the most extraordinary likeness I ever saw; come and look: it's rather a clever drawing too. Here, it's over here, at the end of the room.'

And Hilary was carried off by two or three of his friends, and brought up in front of a water-colour drawing. It represented an artist at work out of doors in winter, ensconced in a sheltered little nook, with a background of broken bank, pollard oak-trees, and in the distance a peep of—why, Croyston Towers, surely! Frank Hilary was rather taken aback, for of a certainty he was the artist. Yes,

there he was; just as he must have appeared on that memorable 14th of February and for the two succeeding days. There could be no mistake; he plainly saw the likeness in the face, to say nothing of the fidelity with which his favourite rough shooting-coat, wide-awake, &c. had been reproduced. Besides, there was the place quite recognisable. What did it mean? Stooping down to examine the drawing, for it was hung low, he was so absorbed in wonder, that he did not hear the little bursts of railery and laughter in which his friends continued to indulge. He kept peering and peering, as if to find out who was the painter; but there were no initials, no name in the corner, nothing to give him a clue.

'I should like to take it down and have a look at the back, to see who it is done by,' said he abstractedly.

'Just as if you didn't know, Frank. You must wait till Monday for the catalogue, eh, before you can possibly find out! What rot it is your pretending to be so innocent! Why, he's actually blushing, look!'

And the remark of his friend, whilst it raised more merriment amongst the others, was strictly true; he *was* blushing, for a sudden idea had crossed his mind.

Was this portrait of himself in any way the solution of the problem of *her* non-reappearance? He remembered that the 14th of February was St. Valentine's day, and this strengthened his idea, though why it should one could hardly guess, for artists do not generally attend much to dates, nor are they very accurate about them.

During the next two or three hours which Frank Hilary spent in the rooms of Burlington House, he paid many furtive visits to the

water-colour room, in the hope of catching some one dusting the glass over his portrait, and so perhaps find out what sort of an individual the artist might be. But nobody gave the least care to the drawing, and Frank was fain to go home in ignorance of who had turned him to such picturesque account. This was on the Tuesday, Thursday was the press day, on Friday came the private view; but Hilary was not high up enough on the ladder of notoriety to be invited, and so he never got a peep into a catalogue. However, he should find out all about it on Monday he thought, and was pacifying his impatience with this reflection and a final pipe on the Friday evening in question, when the last post brought him a letter. It was an important-looking letter too, only the second of its kind he had ever received; but he knew it, and tore it open impatiently. With the official heading of the Royal Academy of Arts, the printed form with names, dates, &c. filled in, it ran thus:

'Sir,—I have to intimate to you that your work, No. 631 in the Catalogue of the Royal Academy for the present year, entitled "A Lady Sketching, Croyston Towers, St. Valentine's day," and priced 40*l.*, has been selected for purchase by Mr. Raphael Madder of 888 Piccadilly. As the Royal Academy only undertakes to register the selection of works, it is left to the artist to communicate with the purchaser in reference to the payment and delivery of the work at the close of the exhibition.

'I am, sir, yours, ———.

'To Frank Hilary, Esq.'

'Capital!' thought Frank, 'this is luck indeed! But who is Mr. Raphael Madder? Why, if I'm not mistaken, he's an artists' colour-man; keeps one of those fashion-

able West-end shops, all polish and pasteboard, to tempt the amateur; and if so he is only a dummy put forward by the real purchaser, who does not want to be known. He could not have been himself at the private view. I shall see about it the first thing to-morrow morning.'

And early on the Saturday Frank walked off to No. 888 Piccadilly, to find his conjecture correct.

'Yes, sir,' said the hopman, 'we have been advised by our customer of the purchase, and have been directed to hand you a cheque for the amount on Monday, on the receipt of your order to receive the picture at the close of the exhibition.'

'But your customer,' said Frank, 'who is your customer?'

'We are not at liberty to say, sir; it was made a particular request that we should *not* say. We often act as agents for our customers in these matters. It saves wealthy people a deal of trouble.'

'H'm,' said Frank, 'I should like to have known where my picture was going nevertheless. You are really stating facts, are you? I mean you are not going in for picture-dealing yourselves.'

'O, dear no, sir. As I say, we do a great deal of agency business of this kind; you will find our name and address given in the catalogue frequently; that is for amateur ladies and gentlemen who don't want their own residences given. See,' went on the man, producing a new but much rumped catalogue of the Exhibition, 'here we are; here's a case this year, "Brown, Corisande, No. 842, care of Mr. Raphael Madder, &c." His finger was travelling down the alphabetical list of contributors at the end of the book. Frank pounced on it eagerly (now he should find out at least the name of the artist who had painted *him*); and saying,

'Allow me,' sought out the water-colour room. Quickly his eye took in a page or two of numbers, titles, and artists' names. Presently he blushed visibly; there it was undoubtedly; that was it—'No. 842—An Artist sketching Croyston Towers, St. Valentine's day;' and who had painted it, after all? Why, 'Corisande Brown'! Then Frank turned to the alphabetical list again to make sure.

'What did you say was the name?' he was going on. 'Yes, certainly, "Corisande Brown," I see, care of Mr. Raphael Madder. O then,' addressing the man behind the counter, 'this picture is by another of your customers?'

The man's eye was following Frank's pointing finger. 'Yes, that is so, sir,' was the answer.

'Do you know if it is for sale?'

'Cannot say, sir, but I should fancy not; amateurs do not generally care to sell.'

'And who is Corisande Brown, may I ask?'

'I am not at liberty to say, sir; it is quite anonymous; in point of fact, I don't know; Mr. Madder manages these things.'

'H'm, very mysterious, indeed,' said Frank half angrily; 'you won't tell me who bought my picture, and you won't tell me who painted a picture I admire; and, supposing I want to buy it, you won't tell me whether it is for sale. Strange way of doing business'

'These are my orders, sir; but I'll find out. I'll ask Mr. Madder if he thinks the drawing you refer to is to be had.'

'Well, I wish you would. I saw it on the varnishing day, and I should like to have it if it is not too much. Well, then, if I call on Monday,' continued Frank, after a pause, 'and give you an order to receive my picture, you say you will give me a cheque for the amount?'

'Yes, sir, and let you know about the drawing at the same time. Good-morning, sir.'

Very much puzzled indeed was Frank with all this. Strange that the portrait of himself should have been christened much as he had christened his portrait of *her*. 'A Lady sketching Croyston Towers, St. Valentine's day.' 'An Artist sketching Croyston Towers, St. Valentine's day.' Odd, too, that Mr. Madder should be acting as agent for the exhibition of the one and for the purchase of the other. Well, it is a coincidence, of course, but, all things remembered, it's a strange one! And Frank went his way musing.

After a hasty run through the rooms on Monday, the opening day, he marched straight off again to Mr. Madder's, and found the cheque, signed by that purveyor of artists' materials, awaiting him. Duly acknowledging it, and giving his order for the delivery of the picture to Mr. Madder, he said,

'Well, what about that drawing? is it for sale?'

'No, sir.'

'Positively?'

'Positively.'

'Now it is not by any chance the work of the same person who bought my picture, is it?'

'Really I don't know, sir; I cannot say.'

'They are both customers of yours?'

'Yes, sir.'

'But they are not both the same person?'

'Upon my word, sir,' said the man, smiling, 'I am not at liberty to say anything.'

No, and strive as he would, Frank could get no more out of Mr. Raphael Madder's man; but he drew his own conclusions, and he had to wait six weeks before he obtained any relief for the unusually perplexed state of his intellect.

The evening set apart by the President and Council of the Royal Academy for their grand *soirée* and reception came round, as it usually does, towards the end of June. Mr. Frank Hilary, like the rest of the exhibitors, was bidden to the entertainment, there to mingle with the motley throng, ranging from the highest in the land to the most obscure followers of art—yes, like the rest of the exhibitors, for they are all invited. 'She' might be there, then; at any rate, 'Corisande Brown' would be invited, and supposing she and the purchaser of his picture were one and the same person, why, he might see her perhaps! So he went to Burlington House in a state of undue trepidation. Constantly he found himself prowling in the neighbourhood, first of his own portrait and then of his own picture. Suddenly, on coming within range of the latter, he started, and had any of his jocose friends been with him (which he thanked his stars was not the case) he certainly would again have become a butt for their good-humoured chaff, for he was blushing up to the roots of his hair.

A little knot of people were standing in front of No. 631, 'A Lady sketching,' &c., evidently examining it with keen interest. One person only, however, in this group had any attraction for Frank. He saw nobody but her; for there she was, unmistakably, looking at her own portrait! Her profile was towards him, as it had been when he made the sketch, as it was now in its reproduction in the finished drawing. The likeness, under this severe test, was even more striking than ever, in spite of the vast difference in costume. In a bewilderment of admiration—not, be it understood, of his own skill, but of her beauty—Hilary hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels. A hand on his shoulder

aroused him, and turning, he was face to face with Mr. Hughes, his host at Hadenham.

'Glad to meet you, Mr. Hilary. I have been looking at your picture of Croyston Towers: it is capital! I recognised it from its fidelity to the sketch you showed me, which you made whilst staying with us; but the figure, the young lady, that was not in your original drawing, I think?—that, I suppose, was a separate study which you did not show me?' and there was an airy significance in Mr. Hughes's last words.

Recovering from his momentary confusion, and stammering out something about its being an afterthought, Frank saw that Mr. Hughes made one of the party that had been looking at his picture.

'It is a capital likeness,' continued that gentleman. 'I know the lady intimately, and she is amazed and puzzled to imagine how you obtained her portrait; for she declares she never sat to you, and is highly indignant. She wishes me to present you to her, however, that she may ask you and call you to account. Allow me: Mr. Hilary, Miss Dacres;' and Frank immediately found himself bowing to his nymph of the woods.

'I am rather pleased with your picture, Mr. Hilary,' she said condescendingly, in a voice that, notwithstanding the hauteur of its tone, set his whole frame tingling; 'it is very like—the place, I mean; we live close to Croyston, and I know it well.'

'I am glad you approve,' said Frank, now no longer blushing, his courage having risen to the occasion.

'But, pray,' she went on, 'how did you get a like—'

'Ah,' he broke in, 'I know what you are going to say. I must ask your forgiveness. A thousand pardons for having taken such

a liberty; but it was irresistible—I mean, you were irresistible; as an artist yourself you can understand how well you came against those dark evergreens.'

'Yes, you have made my dress tell very well, I grant,' she said, glancing towards the picture with an air of patronage; 'but I want to know, and I insist on being told, how you were able to make a likeness of me?—and how do you know I am an artist? Is there anything in my personal appearance that suggests the æsthetic?'

'Yes; particularly when I see you on a camp-stool, with a colour-box on your thumb!'

'Pray, where did you ever see me so?'

'Why, there—where I have painted you!' and Hilary pointed to the picture.

'Indeed! I was not aware that I was being watched. I did not know that espionage was one of the many accomplishments of a painter!'

'I apologise. I dared not let you see me, or I should have lost my one great opportunity; but you had your revenge, I fancy,' he added, looking straight into her dark-gray eyes, which she immediately dropped.

'I don't understand,' she said. 'I certainly did not see you when I was sketching "Old Croyston"'—an emphasis on 'Old Croyston'—'on that very fine St. Valentine's day.'

'Ah!' cried Frank; 'no, you did not see me then; but how about the next day, and the next? They were equally fine; did not you go again to the oak copse?'

'Really I don't remember,' she answered, a little confused.

'No? There is a picture over there—if you won't mind coming to the other end of the room—that might possibly help your memory; it is rather a curious coincidence.'

Frank offered his arm, and they moved away, followed by Mr. Hughes and his two elder daughters, who were with him.

Hilary stopped of course immediately in front of his own portrait.

'That's it,' he said. 'Odd coincidence, is it not?—"An Artist sketching" instead of "A Lady sketching"?''

She made a pretence of looking at the picture, and then of searching for it in the catalogue. Then she said naively,

"Corisande Brown,"—who is she?'

'Ah, who indeed! Whoever she is, she is clever enough; and you see who she has been painting, don't you?'

'It is not unlike you, Mr. Hilary,' she said, with an air of supreme innocence.

'No, not very unlike indeed. I was so vain that I wanted to buy it, because it was like—'

'And you could not?'

'No; Corisande Brown won't sell it.'

'You must take that as a compliment; she does not want to part with you!'

'Ah, if I could only think that! But I don't deserve such happiness, because, you see, I *have* sold *her* portrait'—he chanced this bold shot—'and I have been miserable ever since; and what's more, I can't find out who has bought it.'

'Perhaps Corisande Brown has bought it,' said Miss Dacres archly—the shot seemed to have told—'perhaps she wants it as a companion to her artist; the drawings are much the same size, and would make a happy pair—a pair of Valentines in fact!'

Mr. Hughes here interrupted and changed the conversation by a reference to some other picture, to Frank's infinite disgust; and what with the jostling of the crowd and the talk of the rest of the party,

he never again that night got a word with Miss Dacres. He hovered round her, but she had evidently no intention that he should pursue the subject; and after a while Frank lost sight of her and her friends entirely, as they mingled with the company. He was in an agony of despair, and rushed wildly about the rooms; but people were beginning to go now—the Royal Academy *soirée* of 1870 was over, and the painter had to retire with the rest in a state of dejection that was quite abject. Was there ever such a fascinating charming woman? He began to build the most stupendous castles in the air. He must see her again; but how? He had failed even to get Mr. Hughes's town address, and he was under an engagement to leave London himself in a few days. Poor Frank! he was hard hit—he could not get over it. There was a significance too, he thought, about all the circumstances quite remarkable; and they were, it must be admitted, sufficient to make a deep impression on the heart of a susceptible and sensitive young artist; and we all know how sensitive and susceptible artists are, both young and old.

III.

THE PRIZE.

ONCE more the winter came round. The occupations of the interval had not diverted Frank's thoughts; he dreamt of his nymph of the woods day and night; but his despair was growing chronic, when the hope of seeing her again was revived early in the new year by the receipt of a letter from Mr. Hughes requesting that he would make arrangements to go down to Hadenham to paint the portrait of another of his children. He went

gladly of course, and once more by mid February had nearly completed his work. He had not dared to refer to Miss Dacres: his old timidity having again laid hold of him, he could not think of her without blushing. Mr. Hughes was the first to mention her.

'We are going to drive over to Lockhurst, Mr. Hilary,' he said one day at luncheon; 'there are a few good pictures there; you might be interested. By the way, you met Miss Dacres, I think. Of course, I remember; I introduced you at the Academy *soirée*. I don't know if she is at home, though, now.'

'Miss Dacres lives at Lockhurst then?' inquired Frank.

'Yes, sometimes. She is very well off, and quite independent. She goes about a good deal, but spends the most of her time with an old aunt at Lockhurst; I hope she is there now.'

And we may be sure Frank echoed that hope heartily.

It was realised. Miss Dacres was there, and renewed her acquaintance with Mr. Hilary cordially, if a little shyly; but his courage never forsook him, he found, when once in her presence. Her aunt was not well, and she had to do the honours. The pictures, however, were not of much importance, being principally the work of amateurs; sketches which Miss Dacres had got together from her friends, with here and there a purchase from a water-colour exhibition. They had been nearly all duly inspected, Frank making appropriate reference of course to Miss Dacres' own taste and skill in the art; and the party were passing along a corridor back to the drawing-room for afternoon tea, when the sight of an easel, through a half-open door, caught Hilary's attention.

'Your painting-room, Miss Da-

eres, I presume,' he cried, stopping, whilst Mr. Hughes and his two daughters, who were in advance, continued their way to the drawing-room. 'May I not be privileged to see what you are doing?'

'O, I have very little to show; but if you care to look, walk in.'

He did so, a step in advance of her. In an instant she shot by him like a rush of wind, and with a sweep of her arm rapidly drew a curtain across a little recess or alcove; but Frank's eyes were quicker than her action: she was too late, for he had seen—what? Why, his picture, 'A Lady sketching,' &c., hanging on the wall, and side by side with it, as companion, his own portrait—'An Artist sketching,' &c.!

Covered with confusion and blushes, she stood convicted. Far too generous to take undue advantage, Hilary immediately turned to the work on the easel, and after a few unmeaning words of criticism he said, 'You are going to send this drawing to the Academy?'

'If I get it finished in time,' she answered, reddening a little.

'O, you must; it would never do for "Corisande Brown" not to be represented.'

'I think you are very unkind, Mr. Hilary.'

'Do you, then, behave in a Christian spirit—return good for evil; be kind to me.'

He hardly knew what he was saying, but he was very conscious of the truth of the axiom, 'Faint heart,' &c., and this consciousness swept all before it. He turned towards her.

'I have guessed this, hoped this, all along; that is, that you, Corisande Brown, and the purchaser of my picture, were one and the same person. I have had an intuitive conviction of it, a presentiment, Miss Dacres.'

'I don't believe in presentiments,' she answered, avoiding his eyes and going to the door. 'Tea is waiting.'

'O, pray stop one moment; at least you believe in St. Valentine; you said so at the Academy.'

'I said nothing of the kind.'

'Ah, but you said the two pictures, our two pictures, would make a pair of Valentines, a "happy pair." Accept the omen, Miss Dacres; there must be something in it. Why, to-day is the anniversary—to-day is the 14th; St. Valentine again, as I live! It is fate; we cannot fly in the face of fate when it thus decrees us both a chance in the lottery, and assures me that, if I win, I at least must do so with a priceless prize! Say that I may hope; and if the devotion of a life have any influence, you shall admit that at least you have not drawn a blank.'

He had followed her to the door, and for one moment held her hand in his, and put it to his lips before she passed out, and led the way without a word to the drawing-room.

What need to detail the sequel to a scene like this? Clearly there could be but one. Ground thus broken, Frank Hilary's impetuous courage bore down all obstacles; and some months before the next anniversary of St. Valentine came round, the 'happy pair' were at work in the same studio.

'Corisande Brown' is still a frequent exhibitor. Frank often sits to her (he is very handsome), but she tells him he is by no means so steady a model as he was at that memorable time at Old Croyston.

'Ah, I did not know you were looking at me then,' he pleads, 'and, by the bye, you have never told me how it was you managed to elude my eagle eye; I was looking everywhere for you the two following days.'

'O, it was on the afternoon of St. Valentine's day that I made my sketch of you,' answered Mrs. Hilary. 'I wanted to finish my sketch, and I was returning through the wilderness from lunching with old Lady Belpot, when I caught sight of you in the distance, and I determined to try and have a peep at what you were doing; so I made a great round, and came upon you from the other side of the copse, where you never looked. Of course it was very wrong of me; but I got quite close, so close that I could see your drawing. To my surprise, I beheld you were touching up, not a drawing of Croyston Towers, but

a sketch of myself. I was piqued at your impertinence, and so, as you said afterwards, I took my revenge. I made a sketch of you, and crept away again, like the guilty creature that I was, in the gloom of the evening, without your once having had an idea of my presence. I was not near the place after that.'

'Well, all is fair in love and war,' answered Frank; 'we were both guilty creatures; it was tit for tat. You don't grumble, do you?'

'No, indeed,' answered his wife; 'for I feel that I, no less than you (as you say), have drawn a prize in St. Valentine's Lottery!'

THE ROMANCE OF OLD LONDON.

No. II.—THE WATER-GATE BY CANNON-STREET STATION.

Dowgate, adjoining Cannon-street Station, is one of the few words of British origin that have come down to our time. Dow is a corruption of *dwr* (pr. *doore*), which is still Welsh for water. The great Roman way from the North of England reached to the Thames at Dowgate, where a bridge of boats united it with the Stoney Street, the southern way still to be traced through Kent to the sea. Cannon-street railway-bridge spans the same track.

SHALLOW and broad the river flows
O'er its southern banks, among marsh and sedges;
Away to the north the yew-wood grows
From the far-off hills to the water's edges;
Half hid in the forest dark and dense
Are a few mud huts in a wattled fence.

[...] A rushing brook,* from under the trees,
Down a pebbly bank runs into the river;
While its ripples, stirr'd by the evening breeze,
Make the yew-trees' shadows dance and quiver;
And a woad-stain'd Briton says to his mate,
'See, the brook has made us a Water-gate.'

* The Wall brook.

The armèd legions of conquering Rome
With their eagle-standards the stream are wading ;
With sword and with axe they make them a home
For their merchantmen and their country's trading ;
And the Roman galley rides in state
By the Briton's brook at the Water-gate.

Over the Thames to the Stoney Street
A bridge of boats with the tide is swaying ;
By the northern way comes a girl to greet
Her Roman lover, and chides his staying.
Long is his road, but he comes ere 'tis late
O'er the bridge to the girl at the Water-gate.

* * * * *

A busy town by the river lies,
And slowly grows with the growth of the nation ;
A people come who are skilful and wise,
And with cunning craft they rear them a station ;
With iron beams build it strong and great
By the side of the brook and the Water-gate.

The crafty builders so wise are grown,
Their swift words borrow the lightning to fly on ;
They have taken the Fire King from his throne,
And he draws their cars on a way of iron ;
But the giant captive fights with his fate,
And pants and shrieks by the Water-gate.

Fuller and deeper the river flows
Past its narrow'd banks, among docks and dredges ;
The World's greatest City around it grows,
From the distant hills to the water's edges ;
And an iron roadway massive and straight
Joins Stoney Street to the Water-gate.

L. ALLDRIDGE.

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

SOCIETY AT THE WINTER WATERING-PLACES.

THE belt of our southern seaboard is visited every summer by the tourists and every winter by the invalids. Our Christmases have generally been mild, but the New Year has been ushered in with winds and storms. The invalid population, who have gone to the pretty watering-places sprinkled all along the coast from Hastings to Land's End, have received only a rude welcome and have partaken of alarming visitations. The waves have been dashing against their windows, and the boats have been plying in the streets. They have been perhaps regretting that they have not made the few days' railway journey that would take them to the Riviera, or the few days' sail that would bring them to Madeira. All along the coast, with a perfect unanimity, floods and storms have marked the coming of the New Year and the arrival of visitants, who in swallow-swarms flee to warmer skies on the advent of winter. But we cannot change our planet. Nowhere have air and ocean been more tumultuous than at Hastings and St. Leonards—the noble and united watering-place, which has such a great, deserved, and increasing reputation. I wish other watering-places would take example by Hastings, and introduce those glass-covered resting-places with cosy seats, which are such a comfort to delicate invalids. This is the last improvement in winter watering-places, but it has not extended much beyond Sussex. But even on the wildest days

on the south coast, when London ways are miry and horrible, there are gleams of sunshine; the strong winds sweep the pavement dry, and a walk, pleasant though brief, is attainable. I have mentioned Hastings almost by accident; but I think that to it belong the premier honours of watering-places. It has also the advantage of being easily accessible in every direction. Other new ones start up in the neighbourhood, but its rapid development outstrips them all. I observe that Mr. Brassey, its member, is wisely using some of his vast wealth in dowering his constituents with a new museum and library. I observe that the old *habitués* of the place have a constant programme. In the morning they go to the old town, and in the afternoon to the new town; they do their shopping, they climb the heights, they potter about on the beach watching boats and boatmen, and in the afternoon they take the St. Leonards direction. The pier is almost abandoned, but there is a never-failing promenade along Eversfield-place and the Marina.

Of all our winter health resorts the medical preëminence is justly due to Penzance. Torquay comes nearest in value through its protective screen of hills, but there are reasons for preferring Penzance to Torquay. Unlike Torquay, however, Penzance has its trade and shipping, and has failed to make itself a fashionable residence for valetudinarians. Pulmonary invalids, however, have never been slow in recognising its value. The town has not got the scenic loveli-

ness of Torquay nor the ready access to London, with numerous resources, by which Torquay makes itself acceptable to visitants. But it fronts the broad Atlantic. You might sail away to the Southern Pole without touching land. You get, what you do not get in Torbay, the full sweet influences of the Gulf Stream. Even in this month of January you find the wild-flowers in profusion. The ferns flourish all the year, and the tall geraniums touch your bedroom window. Opposite the beach you are on the granite. Higher up you get on the slate-chalk, which is to be avoided, for the invalid cannot remember too carefully that the soil and subsoil are as important for health as the climate. The temperature is that of Italy. Even Italians have come from home to Penzance for the sake of the climate. But the difference between Penzance and Naples is this: at Penzance you get one fine day to ten that are rainy; at Naples you get only one wet day out of ten. At Penzance there is regularly a flood of rains and waters. At other places you may get some angury of the weather from the direction of the wind. But be the wind east, west, north, or south, you have always rain at Penzance.

The place really does not do itself justice. It knows nothing of squares and stately terraces and pleasure-gardens. It does not lay itself out for invalids; it does not advertise its attractions as nearly every other watering-place does; it knows nothing of a pier or band or *établissement* of any kind; it does not even make the best of its natural advantages. The harbour at Penzance is not much of a harbour; but close by, at Newlyn, is a natural harbour, which with a slight expenditure might be able to enclose the whole navy of Eng-

land. An act was procured, but the time granted has been allowed to expire without any use of it having been made. There is no sanatorium, no cottage or convalescent hospital, such as in other towns have conferred inestimable blessings on the poor, and by a happy reciprocity have obtained advantages for themselves. *O fortunati nimium, bona si sua norint*, is a line which might exactly suit the people of Penzance. Penzance is just now best known as giving a member to Liskeard, and a title to the judge who has to deal with excessive ritual.

Penzance is the end of the railway system in England. Very slow is this Cornwall line; the train stops at every station, and is never allowed to exceed a very moderate speed. This alone is sufficient to deter many invalids, to whom a prolonged railway journey is a very serious consideration. The peculiar charm of the place is to our mind that the town does not consist of a consumptive population, but has all kinds of interests. Just inside the harbour is the little steamer which will take you away forty miles to the Scilly Isles. Mr. Freeman has of late been talking a great deal of the benevolent autocracy of the late Mr. Augustus Smith of the Scilly Isles; but I, who know them well, denounce his rule as a tyranny, and maintain that it did far more harm than good. Here are the Italian vessels which are loading with barrels of pilchard for Genoa and other ports on the Italian seaboard. The trains are running every day to London with the broccoli. Land lets for thirty or forty pounds an acre, and sends many tons of early vegetables daily to London. Then there are two bits of scenery which draw visitors from all lands in all weathers; these, of course, are St. Michael's Mount and the Land's

End. Sir John St. Aubyn is just now building an additional set of rooms in the old castle. Then it is to be said for Penzance that it has the most delicious library in the western country; I say this with a grateful recollection of the libraries of Truro and Plymouth and Exeter. Then there is an unfailing source of interest, if you can only understand their ways, in the mining and fishing population.

What are our invalids to do? Of course we are speaking of the more hopeful cases, which admit of patients getting out of doors. They do very much the same at all the southern watering-places. They watch eagerly for the transitory gleam of sunshine, then, well wrapped up, they go to the library, or they take a drive, or they walk along the esplanade. Sometimes they go to parties in the evening, in the closest of close carriages. A cheerful dinner-party is an admirable tonic for invalids. There is one cheerful-minded doctor who has prescribed 'the society of delightful young ladies.' Then there are the mild evening relaxations, which amuse without exciting. Then invalids have generally an *entourage* of friends and acquaintances who have always gaiety and society for themselves. At Torquay there are the daily drives and the evening balls. This is of course the case also with the large towns, such as Hastings, St. Leonards, and Bournemouth; but at such places as Ventnor, Salcombe, and Dawlish there seems to be a great dearth of healthy recreation. Invalids have always the comfort of comparing prescriptions and talking about their symptoms; and this is a much more serious matter than might be supposed. There is a thrill of happy congratulation when some poor tottering invalid has thrown away stick and wraps, and is rather

jauntily disporting himself on the sands. On the other hand, there is quite a thrill of regret when the whisper goes that the climate of such a place does not suit poor Jones, who must go to Algiers, or a longer journey still. Then there is a thrill of excitement because the great London physician has been called in specially to see some case, and it is odd if he has not got some kind wise word to say to some of his old patients whom he may encounter in their walk on the beach, which he is sure to take for his own behoof before he returns to town.

As we have spoken of our oldest watering-places, viz. Hastings and Penzance, we ought perhaps to say a word of the youngest—Bournemouth. The idea is that Bournemouth—so called from the little bourne or stream which prattles down to the beach—confers great benefit, like Arcachon, through the odour of its pine-groves. The prevailing presence of evergreens is both a mental and bodily refreshment, and some practitioners think that the resinous perfume has a distinct medical use. Socially speaking, one very noticeable feature is the entire absence of lodging-houses. There are no rows of houses, as in nearly every other watering-place, facing the sea, but every house is detached and in its own grounds. The result is that Bournemouth is of enormous extent for its population. Even business men are unbusiness-like; the population in general is lazy, owing to the Madeira climate and temperature. Still the different Church parties are able to display an enlivening animosity, and, as at Tunbridge Wells, Low Church will not call on High Church. Lord Chancellor Cairns has been staying at his magnificent new residence, Landisfarne, on the East Cliff; and I hope the great

lawyer has derived real benefit from the Channel breezes.

CHARLES KINGSLEY: A BRIEF
MONOGRAPH.*

It is more with Charles Kingsley than with Mrs. Kingsley's *Life of Charles Kingsley* that our few remarks will be concerned. The biography is in its way a very good one. It is replete with interest; there is hardly a page which one does not read with pleasure and instruction. It is enough to say that one half of the entire work is Charles Kingsley's own composition, mainly in the many letters which, with wonderful fullness and vehemence, he would throw off to almost any one who addressed an inquiry to him, when he thought the inquiry conceived in an honest spirit and to embrace an important issue. But the work, as is almost unavoidable, is beset with reticences. We should like, for instance, to have heard more about his brother and children. We may gradually gather up a portraiture of a great and good man, but the clearly-defined character is not at once set before us. In writing some few memorial words of a wonderful life, we shall not strictly limit ourselves to the volumes before us, but shall also use unpublished materials. We have had several good biographies of late, such as those of Ticknor and Macaulay; but we know of none which we think superior to this in the interest of the subject and the variety of contents.

What the public knew about Charles Kingsley was in inverse ratio to the matters on which he really concentrated himself. What the public knew best was the novel and the essay and the poem. His *Hypatia* was his best work, in his

own judgment. He had studied his period thoroughly, and he said that, without vanity, he could have taught Gibbon a few things on that particular period. He always felt that his works did not do him justice; that they were merely pro-lusions for a greater work; that he could do something better than he had done. He lived liberally, in some ways expensively, and he wrote for money, which is hardly the most favourable circumstance for the cultivation of original powers. He used to vindicate the writing for money as if with a sort of feeling that it required vindication. But theology was his darling pursuit. He especially rejoiced in the Westminster canonry, because it promised to set him free from book-making to sermon-writing. He fully appreciated his position at Westminster, and threw his whole soul into it. But, properly speaking, each of his books was religious, not so much in dealing with religious subjects as dealing with secular subjects religiously. The successive volumes of sermons which he threw off were a great power in their way. They were worth to him the average income of a benefice. But what was nearest to his heart was their influence for good in the world. People who objected on principle to all sermons read Charles Kingsley's. In early days he was politically a Chartist, and theologically he had a natural affinity for heterodoxy and liberalism. But he eventually became something like a Tory, and was also perfectly orthodox. He would indulge sometimes in a vein of daring speculation; and Mr. Malcolm MacColl, in one of his books, says latterly he took up strongly the doctrine of Purgatory, which was odd for such a thorough anti-Romanist as he always professed to be. But his whole soul was

* *Letters and Memoir of Charles Kingsley*. By his Widow. Two vols. (Henry S. King & Co.)

bent in doing good, and doing it in his own way. In a remarkable way he became all things to all men. To all outward seeming he was thoroughly a man of the world; all mere clericalism he simply abhorred; he knew society in all phases, thoroughly enjoyed life and fun, had 'a tidy knowledge of vintages,' and would make himself thoroughly at home with all sorts and conditions of men. But he never lost sight of the office of a priest and teacher. His appearances at Westminster Abbey were very striking, and indicated how intense was his eagerness in his work,—an intensity which shortened his days.

The great business and effort of his life, of which we see the outcome in all he said or did, was that he himself, Charles Kingsley, should not be below the level of what he taught; he exercised himself to be without offence before God and man; he exemplified the lines which he wrote for his niece, Mrs. Theodore Waldron:

'Be good, and let who will be clever;
Do noble deeds, not dream them all
day long;
And so make life, death, and that vast for
ever,
One grand sweet song.'

What was very remarkable in the case of this imperious high-spirited man was his deep humility and self-abasement, in this way much resembling the late John Keble. Instances abound of his exercising the rarest generosity and kindness. We might give various little anecdotes respecting him supplementary to those which we find in these volumes. Perrot, the Dartmoor guide, was telling us of a day's fishing he had with him. Kingsley reckoned that Perrot and others had a better time of it than himself; he had so much money to earn and consequently so much work to do. The real holiday days for fishing were only so

many in the year. Two young ladies belated on Dartmoor, going into Prince's Town, were alarmed by the rapid strides of a man gaining fast upon them in the darkness. They quickened their pace, but were outstripped. 'Don't be afraid, young ladies,' exclaimed a stammering voice, 'I am a clergyman, and my name is Charles Kingsley, and I will take you safely home.' The great thing that struck you at once with Charles Kingsley was the eye. It was peculiarly restless and piercing. The rapid glance which he threw from his pulpit seemed in a moment to gather in every one before him. It was an eye which was unsatisfied with seeing. His love and knowledge of Nature were immense. He longed to be at the heart of everything. Night and day the active eyes and the keen intellect were busy. He was continually watching the starry heavens; he watched cloudland with a passionate love, and would say, using Luther's phrase, that to him the winged cloud was a living creature, with hands and feet. He gloried in garden and stream, and the firs of the heath. His lot being cast in a remote village, he knew that he must make his home either a prison or a paradise; he made it a paradise, and in early life he found his Eve. And his intense love reminds us of the great poetic affections made memorable in literature, such as those for Laura or Beatrice. But amid all the elements of rest and repose around him the man himself could not rest; it was not in him. When a man having finished his ordinary work would think of repose, Charles Kingsley would shake himself as a lion, gather all his energies together, and sit down to work which taxed them to the full.

He was a man who felt and expressed himself strongly. He had

tremendous likes and dislikes. He used to call Bulwer Lytton by the name of Mephistopheles. One of the greatest luminaries of the High Church party he denominated 'a wind-bag.' On the other hand he had an immense respect for John Henry Newman, the first dialectician of our age, who forensically worsted him by his *Apologia*. No thing, however, was more characteristic of Kingsley than his general fairness of mind, and his desire to do justice to all.

He loved to travel everywhere. His imagination was kindled by the thoughts of the gorgeous western world, and he went out to the beautiful islands which had furnished so much towards his English epical story, *Westward Ho!* Then, like many other English clergymen, he was strongly fascinated by the North Pacific Railway. He too must see the Rocky Mountains, and the Yosemite Valley, and the wonders of California. Wales and the western counties of England he knew thoroughly well. Lately we were staying at an inn in the heart of the Welsh mountains, which he has celebrated both in prose and verse, and where a whole cluster of traditions belongs to him.

And yet everywhere and at all times his true centre was in his parish and his home. However far he travelled, there was the silken chain which drew him homewards. He 'worked' Eversley, as a parson would say, thoroughly well. In addition to his two services he opened a school-chapel at Bremshill for afternoon service. When one of his books made a good profit, the first thing he did was to raise the stipend of his curate. While residing at Eversley he had also to find a home, first at Cambridge, then at Chester, then at Westminster. His Cambridge work, which cost him the hardest labour,

was the least satisfactory. With Nature, human nature, and religion he was thoroughly familiar; but he was unaccustomed, except in the rare instance of *Hypatia*, to deal with the phenomena of history, and he had some idea, hardly very intelligible either to himself or others, of applying scientific laws to the facts of history. He was a popular lecturer at Cambridge, and filled his class-room. The only occasion on which we ever saw him on the platform was at the Southampton Church Congress. He then spoke of 'his boys' at Cambridge, a term which he was very fond of applying to them. He had a curious sinuous motion of the body, the movement was quite serpentine, when he made a speech, and his stammering, which often gave him great trouble, appeared on such occasions entirely to vanish. But wherever Kingsley went he left the full impress of his character. You should talk to the Chester people about him. There have been few men with such an *entourage* of friends, from the Queen and the Prince to the Hampshire ditcher and delver. Those who knew least of him as a great and famous man loved him for his goodness and sympathy. He himself was greater than any of his books; and his life may be studied, and in very much copied, as the best book of all.

A LOVER OF NATURE.

A most interesting work is Mr. Smiles's *Life of a Naturalist*.* Mr. Smiles has in his *Self-help* mentioned the extraordinary artisan of Banff. The Linnæan Society had made him an Associate; and by various learned societies full evidence had been given of the scientific value of his investigations. But Banff only gave him

* *Life of a Naturalist*. By Samuel Smiles. (Murray.)

the curatorship of its Museum, worth some five pounds a year, and the prophet, using the word in the old sense of teacher, was entirely without honour in his own country. It is seldom, indeed, that a man's life is written while he is still alive, but in his case there was abundant reason. It has also resulted in abundant good. A number of noblemen and gentlemen formed a committee to raise funds for his declining days; and the Queen, through Lord Beaconsfield, promptly conferred a well-deserved pension. The interesting circumstances belonging to the publication of the work should not, however, divert attention from the marvellous story told in the work itself.

Edwards was only a child in arms when he nearly lost his life by a leap to catch an insect. All the remainder of his days was destined to be a continuation of this strange impulse. At the time of this occurrence he was four months old. His love of all animal life grew with his growth. When at school his behaviour was not less unaccountable; frogs, tadpoles, beetles, spiders, horse-leeches, and even snakes—anything living that he could obtain—were collected and carefully treasured up; but as he was generally unsuccessful in keeping his little friends captive, and as the people about him were unable to appreciate the peculiarity of his taste, he managed to get into sad disgrace: a centipede on a schoolmaster's arm or a wasp's nest taken home in secrecy was sufficient to bring down upon him the wrath of both tutor and parent. But it was of no avail: the love of all that Nature produced was in him, and could not be knocked out.

He went to work at the early age of six, and at eleven was duly apprenticed to a shoemaker, at the high wages of eighteenpence a

week, and though fifty-one years have since passed he still 'sticks to his last.' The restraints of his apprenticeship were too much for him: his master was a drunken dissolute fellow; and although Mr. Smiles tells us that 'shoemakers are usually very fond of pets,' this man seems to have had a very strong aversion not only to pets, but to all who cared for them; the consequence of which was that Edward, having been found one day playing with a sparrow, and having on another occasion surreptitiously hidden away three moles, was violently ejected from his master's house. He never returned to it. At eighteen he joined the Aberdeenshire militia, and at this age we might at least expect him to be conducting himself rationally; but one day, in the midst of drill, a fine butterfly flew past; the temptation was too great, Edward was in pursuit at once. He was shortly, however, overtaken by the corporal, and the following colloquy took place: 'What's up, Edward?' 'Nothing.' 'The deuce!' 'No, it wasn't that; it was a splendid butterfly.' 'A butterdevil!' 'No, it was a butterfly.' 'Stuff!' said the corporal, 'are you mad?' And having satisfied himself that such was probably the case, the corporal led him to the guard-house. On the way, an officer accompanied by some ladies happened to pass, and on hearing the nature of the offence the ladies interceded on poor Edward's behalf, and he was set at liberty.

At the age of twenty he married a good wife, and he then began a series of nocturnal excursions in search of natural curiosities. His hours of work were from six in the morning till nine at night, so that he had little time to spare for science; but he would start out late at night with his gun and his wallet, sleep frequently in the open

air, and return home for his work.

When he had been married about eight years he found he had accumulated a very large number of specimens of the flora and fauna of his neighbourhood, and he now determined to exhibit the collection at a fair in Banff. The experiment being moderately successful, he arranged for an exhibition in Aberdeen; this he opened in the following year, but it was a failure; few came, and the expenses of it soon ran him hopelessly in debt. In his despair his faith and hope seemed to give way, and he was on the point of committing suicide. Some remarkable natural appearances arrested his attention and caused him to give up the design. There was nothing for it but to part with everything he possessed and begin the world again, under circumstances of discredit and discouragement. Those late hours and nocturnal wanderings ruined his health; but knowledge throughout was its own exceeding great reward, and ample honour and recognition have come to crown the evening of his days.

HUMOROUS ART.

THE eighth volume of *Vanity Fair* merits a special place in a section like this. It may fairly claim, as it does in the preface, that this volume is in some respects superior to any of its predecessors. Good John Bunyan doubtless did not dream of these younger artists when he sketched the wonderful original of the Fair from which Thackeray and Jehu Junior have alike drawn inspiration.

Vanity Fair certainly maintains that exquisite *chic* (to use the handy elastic French word) which won the peculiar position it holds. The volume must be a refreshing annual to the 'governing English-

man' in our colonies and dependencies, far removed from the delights of 'The Row' and Clubland.

Laughable Lyrics: a Fourth Book of Nonsense, Poems, Songs, Botany, Music, &c., by Edward Lear (R. J. Bush, Charing-cross). It is just thirty years since Mr. Lear published his *First Book of Nonsense*. His hand has not lost its cunning. No one who has seen any of the three earlier series is likely to be content without the fourth. The strange, weird, *bizarre* rhymes and pictures have a spell all their own. 'The Dong with a luminous Nose' and 'The Pobble who has no Toes'—what are they? with what can you compare them? They seem like shadows of a dream, or echoes from some other far-off sphere of existence. But you 'chortle' while you read the droll jingle, and examine the humorous pre-Raphaelite pictures. *They are rhymes which haunt you.* Listen to the tale of

'THE QUANGLE WANGLE'S HAT.

I.
On the top of the Crumpetty Tree
The Quangle Wangle sat;
But his face you could not see,
On account of his Beaver Hat.
For his Hat was a hundred and two feet
wide,
With ribbons and bibbons on every side,
And bells and buttons and loops and
lace,
So that nobody ever could see the face
Of the Quangle Wangle Quee.

II.
The Quangle Wangle said
To himself on the Crumpetty Tree,—
"Jam; and jelly; and bread;
Are the best of food for me!
But the longer I live on this Crumpetty
Tree,
The plainer than ever it seems to me
That very few people come this way,
And that life on the whole is far from
gay!"
Said the Quangle Wangle Quee.

III.
But there came to the Crumpetty Tree
Mr. and Mrs. Canary;
And they said,—“Did ever you see
Any spot so charmingly airy?”

May we build a nest on your lovely Hat?
 Mr. Quangle Wangle, grant us that.
 O, please let us come and build a nest,
 Of whatever material suits you best,
 Mr. Quangle Wangle Quee."

IV.

And besides, to the Crumpetty Tree
 Came the Stork, the Duck, and the
 Owl,
 The Snail and the Bumble-Bee,
 The Frog and the Fimble Fowl
 (The Fimble Fowl with a Corkscrew leg);
 And all of them said,—“ We humbly beg,
 We may build our homes on your lovely
 Hat,—
 Mr. Quangle Wangle; grant us that!
 Mr. Quangle Wangle Quee."

V.

And the Golden Grouse came there,—
 And the Pobble, who has no toes,—
 And the small Olympian Bear,—
 And the Dong with a luminous nose,
 And the Blue Baboon, who play'd the
 flute,—
 And the Orient Calf from the land of
 Tuta,—
 And the Attery Squash, and the Biaky
 Bat,—
 All came and built on the lovely Hat
 Of the Quangle Wangle Quee.

VI.

And the Quangle Wangle said
 To himself on the Crumpetty Tree,—
 " When all these creatures move,
 What a wonderful noise there'll be!"
 And at night, by the light of the Mul-
 berry Moon,
 They danced to the Flute of the Blue
 Baboon,
 On the broad green leaves of the Crum-
 petty Tree;
 And all were as happy as happy could
 be,
 With the Quangle Wangle Quee."

The Public and Private Life of Animals (Sampson Low & Co.) is a curious and suggestive book. In these pictures and adaptations from the French of Balzac, Droz, Jules Janin, E. Lemoine, Alfred de Musset, Georges Sand, &c., Mr. J. Thomson introduces us to a style of illustration of which Ernest Griset has been hitherto the chief interpreter to English eyes. Opinions will vary as to the value of the text. To some it will appear flat, to others far-fetched in parts. But there is a wealth of imagination in this

richly-illustrated volume, which deserves to give it a permanent place, not only on the book-shelves of the young folk, but of all who can relish the quaint conceit underlying the idea of 'Animals, painted by themselves.' If smoking-rooms have libraries,—and why should they not?—this book is one of the right sort for such a place.

Johnnykin and the Goblins, by Charles G. Leland (Macmillan & Co.). If Alice had never visited 'Wonderland,' certain other goblins would never have been seen on this earth. But this little volume, with its quaint original illustrations by the author, is well worthy of a place in the choice Juvenile Library which Messrs. Macmillan have made famous.

How Johnnykin talked with the Stone Image, how he sang with an Owl, what he saw in Goblinland, and how he *did* see Willie Winkie one day, will charm many little bright eyes. Amongst the pictures we are specially arrested by 'The Bird's Eye,' 'The Bird of Wisdom,' 'The Bogey,' 'The Rush Fairies,' 'The Dreadful Stupids,' and 'The Goblin Spelling Bee.' We give the rhyme which tells us that when one finds a very perfect little pebble a fairy is present :

'I.

Down in the pond where fishes dive
 Are little green fairies all alive;
 There they swim and there they creep,
 Down in the water ever so deep.

II.

There never were people half so neat;
 They scrub the rocks with hands and
 feet;
 They polish the stones wherever they're
 found,
 And that's what makes the pebbles so
 round.

III.

And when you walk by the water bright,
 And find a pebble round and white,
 You may see for yourself what fairies do,
 Who placed it there as a present for
 you."

ART AND SCIENCE.

Two enjoyable houses open their doors during the break which comes between Boxing-day and that meeting of Parliament 'for despatch of business' which brings with it 'the season.' These houses are the Royal Academy, with its Winter Exhibition of Old Masters, and the Royal Institution, with its interesting 'Friday Evenings before Easter.'

The Winter Exhibition is now happily such an assured success that the doubts and fears which attended its start are fairly dismissed. The loan of examples from the vast art treasures of England is becoming more easily obtainable, whilst the growing interest of the public is a gratifying proof of the soundness of the idea and of the existence of a real interest in Art—a thing which some cynical students of the gay May crowd affect to doubt.

This year's Exhibition is extremely good, both in variety and in the excellence of the examples. No visitor to the metropolis should omit a quiet forenoon saunter through these noble galleries. The lover of English Art will have an opportunity of seeing fine pictures by masters of whom he has heard much, but seen little; and those who are familiar with the great collections of Europe will be able to dwell at leisure on many gems which they have hitherto eyed at a distance through the pages of 'Waagen.' A noticeable feature this year is the numerous examples of Raeburn, the great Scottish portrait-painter, to whom we recently directed attention.

The first 'Friday evening' at the Royal Institution (on January 19) brought Professor Tyndall to the front again, with a continuation of

the experiments which he explained last year on the profoundly interesting and 'burning' question of 'Spontaneous Generation.' We are here face to face with the great problem of the origin of life, with the doctrines of evolution, and the opposing schools of physical experimenters and biologists.

The lecture was entitled 'A Combat with an Infective Atmosphere.' It brought before the large and intellectual audience assembled to hear it the results of a series of elaborate experiments, and also the apparatus employed in conducting them. To put it shortly, as we must do here, the object was to ascertain the development or non-development of the lower organisms in a thoroughly moteless atmosphere. The earlier results were curiously oscillating and contradictory. De Quincey defined a paradox as a veiled truth; so Professor Tyndall, pondering the puzzle before him, fell back on the truth and constancy of Nature and suspected a flaw in his processes, careful as they had been. A gradually increasing severity of experiment conducted in the pure air at Kew—away from the vitiated atmosphere of the Royal Institution—led to uniform and remarkable results, which it is beyond the scope of these notes to detail. As a physical experiment the crowning process, for the exclusion of all air from the test infusions exhibited at the lecture, was remarkably beautiful. So far well, but we stand on the very threshold still of a far deeper inquiry. How far will science yet be able to grapple with the profound and shifting problem?

In the coming weeks Sir John Lubbock, Professor Huxley, Professor Gladstone, and others will contribute to these interesting evenings.

THE RIGHT CHORD AT LAST.

A Valentine for the Harp.

'FORCE the boom and the brunt of battle
From the anguish of straining cords;
The trailing of guns and the rattle,
And the clash and the clatter of swords.
Give wings to the vanquished and flying;
With the spur let the victor be sped;
Deal drouth and despair to the dying—
Deal the desolate dirge for the dead.

Force the crashing of bells and the clamour
Flaunt the flutter of flags o'er the files,
With the pious pride and the glamour
Of war in cathedral aisles.
Let the accents of heroes falter,
And perish in thunders of praise;
Speed the blessing of shrift from the altar,
And the prayer of the requiem raise.

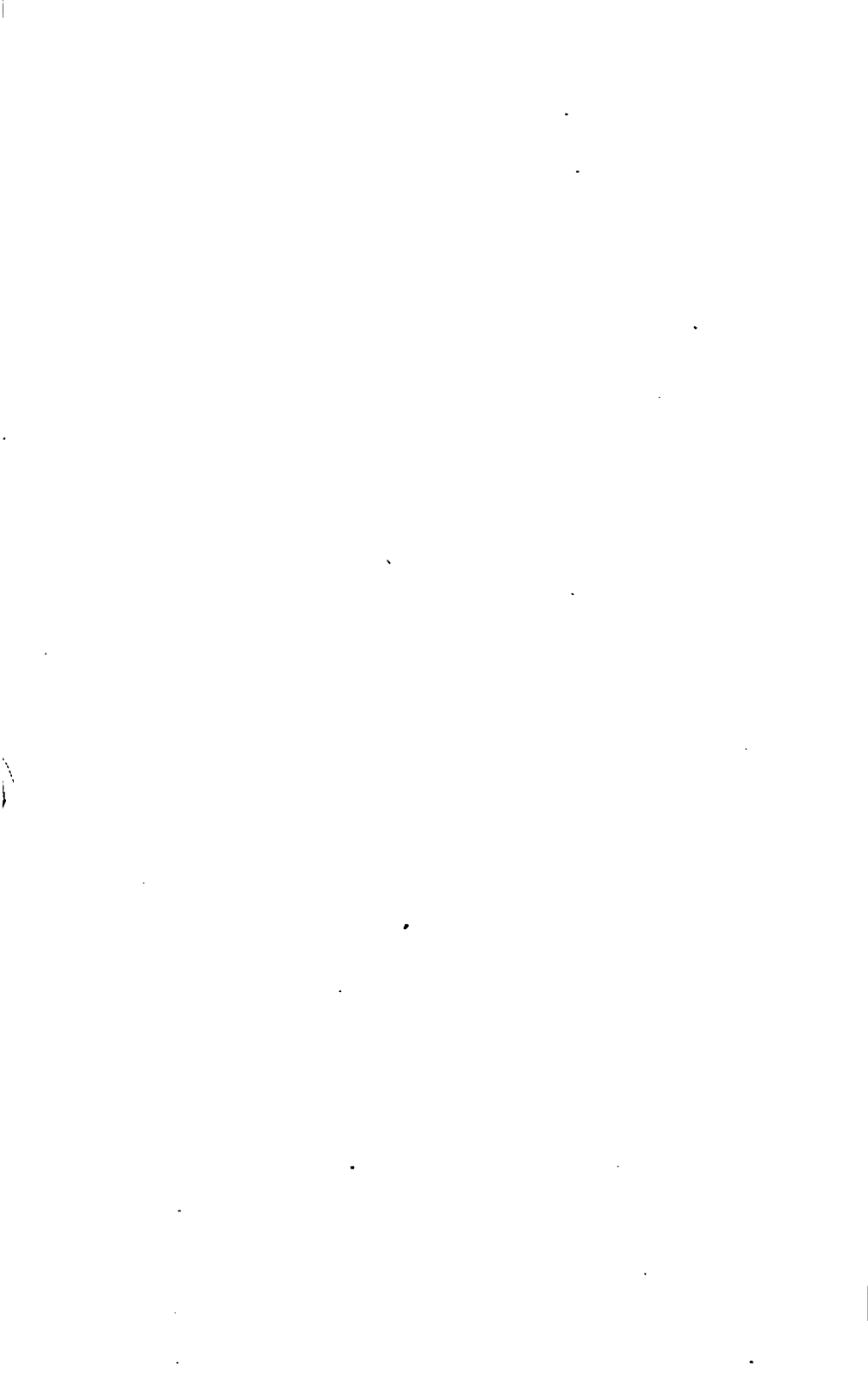
Collect now the chiefs of the nations
Where the standards of strife are furl'd;
Yea, summon the far federations
Of the strength and the law of the world.
Let the lisping child lead the lion,
And couple the last with the steer;
Call the dolphin to succour Arion;
Bid the ravens sustain the seer.

Sing the friendship of earth and of heaven,
The concourse of ocean and sky;
Sing of chaos forgot and forgiven,
And of forces in harmony.
Sing the sameness of will and of duty,
Of might and of justice at one;
Sing of Art as the priestess of Beauty—
Alas! who may sing of thine own?

Thus whispered my tongue to a maiden,
As I worshipping stood by her side,
Whose lips that with music were laden
And fate-weaving fingers replied.
Yet was my heart uncontented,
Till at length, all my fortune to prove,
That ask'd, and she sweetly consented
Harp and voice to attune to my love.



THE RIGHT CHORD AT LAST :
A VALENTINE FOR THE HARP.







THE MODERN ZODIAC:
AN ARTIST'S ALMANAC OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.



FIG. 10. THE ZODIAC.
AN ALPHABETICALLY ORDERED SET OF STARS.

LONDON SOCIETY.

MARCH 1877.

THE TWO JONESES.

A Story of St. David's Day.

CHAPTER I.

It was the 1st of March, in the year of grace 18—. In a merchant's office, not far from Cheap-side, a little man sat at a high desk, trying hard, apparently, to keep one eye on the rows of figures before him, and the other on the office-clock. Failing in this, his glances travelled from the one to the other with pendulum-like regularity. At last the clock struck the wished-for hour of six; and the little man shut the big ledger with a bang, and after locking it up carefully in the office-safe, dashed into a dark cupboard, and began a hasty but careful toilet, involving great splashing of water, and much violent exercise with a stumpy nail-brush. Evan Jones was nominally managing-clerk, and really general factotum, to the firm of Borwick & Brown, hard-wood merchants. He was fifty years of age, short, fat, and good-natured, though a little peppery at times. He had a numerous family, whom he found it anything but easy to feed and bring up on his modest salary of fifty shillings a week. With strict economy, however, he managed just to make

both ends meet. Not for him were the breezy sands of Ramsgate, or the chestnut avenues of Hampton Court. Not for him were the mild havana or the fragrant cigarette. He had no vices and desired no luxuries. One indulgence alone, in the course of the year, did he permit himself. He was a Welshman to the backbone, and herein lay his one extravagance. Come what might, and however depressed the condition of the domestic money-market, he was always present at the dinner of the 'United Welshmen' on St. David's Day. The necessary guinea was to Jones as much as a hundred to many of the other guests who assembled at the banquet in question—a sum to be saved and scraped together by infinite sacrifice and self-denial. But

'Though back and sides go bare,
Though hands and feet go cold,'

as the old song says, scraped together it must be, by hook or by crook. For nearly a week prior to the present occasion, Evan's dinner had consisted of a saveloy and a penny roll; and on the day of our story he had taken no food whatever since his frugal break-

fast, intending to compensate himself handsomely for his abstinence at the expense of the 'United Welshmen.' He had, in truth, gone so long without food as to feel a little exhausted; but he consoled himself with the thought of the splendid appetite he should carry to the festive board; and having at last completed his toilet, he shut up the office, and started for the hostelry where the dinner was to be held, feeling at least six feet high, and humming *Ar hyd y nos* with patriotic energy.

At almost the same moment when Evan Jones started on his journey, a tall handsome man, in faultless evening attire, stepped out of a West-end mansion, outside of which a brougham was waiting. A graceful little lady, with a bright girlish face, accompanied him to the hall-door.

'You won't be very late, Owen, will you?' she said, coaxingly.

'Not very early, I am afraid, pet. We "Welshmen" are rare fellows for keeping it up; and if I came away before all the national toasts had been duly honoured, I should never hear the last of it.'

'Very well, dear; then I suppose I mustn't expect you till I see you. I hope you will have a pleasant evening. Don't take too much wine,' she continued laughingly.

'Can't answer for myself on such an occasion,' her husband responded. 'The —— Tavern,' he said to the coachman; and kissing his hand to his wife, in a few moments was whirled out of sight.

CHAPTER II.

THE 'United Welshmen' had finished their dinner, and had

made considerable progress with their dessert. Each man wore attached to his button-hole a wonderful composition of green and white satin and silver filagree, which was supposed (by dint of making-believe very much indeed) to represent the 'leek' sacred to the occasion. A perfect hurricane of *n*'s and *m*'s and *p*'s and *l*'s and *w*'s flew about the room, only ceasing for a few moments when the chairman rose to propose a toast, or the bards at the far end of the banquet-hall tuned their harps for some Cambrian melody. Evan Jones was seated at the festive board, but, alas, no longer the spick-and-span Evan Jones who had but a couple of hours earlier left the office of Messrs. Borwick & Brown. His carefully-brushed hair was now rough and dishevelled, his face red, his shirt-front limp and crumpled, his utterance thick, and his general appearance that of a gentleman who has dined 'not wisely, but too well.' Poor Evan had been by no means immoderate in his potations, but he had so weakened himself by long fasting, that the little he had taken had had an exaggerated effect upon him, and he was rapidly becoming argumentative, not to say pugnacious. It was an article of faith with him, even in his sober moments, that he was in some mysterious way connected with the last of the Welsh kings, and in his present elevated condition this idea took possession of his mind with redoubled emphasis. He had more than once commenced a sentence beginning, 'As a 'scendant of Llewellyn,' but without getting any further. At the second failure his left-hand neighbour, to whom the observation was addressed, replied profanely, 'O, blow Llewellyn!' Evan Jones looked at him for a

moment with an expression of immeasurable scorn and disgust, and then turned to his right-hand neighbour: 'S a deshendant of Llewellyn, 'pears to me—as a 'scendant—of Llewellyn—' and then stopped again.

'Cwm nog lwyn bora dwmnath cwlyd llimach bach,* replied his right-hand neighbour.

'Dwylllog lwmno gwloch y dina nos,' remarked another of the party.

'Cwlla gwyn dwylleth dym da y cwi bala llewelly caerloc,' responded Jones, whose tongue was loose enough in his native Welsh, and who would probably have continued in the same strain for some time, had not the chairman requested attention for the 'March of the Men of Harlech,' which was about to be given by the choir. Jones sat still during the chorus, with head and hand keeping tipsy time to the measure; but his soul waxed hot within him under the influence of the inspiring strains, and no sooner had they ceased than he wildly got upon his legs, and said in a loud thick voice,

'Mis'r Chairman, I shay! 'S a humble representative—I mean ancestor—I mean 'scendant—of Llewellyn, I don't think this 'spicious occasion—I shay I don't think this 'spicious 'casion—'

Here there were loud cries of 'Order!' 'Chair!' 'Sit down!' And Jones was pulled violently down by the coat-tails by one of his neighbours. The gentlemanly-looking man to whom we have alluded in our first chapter was Jones's *vis-à-vis* at the table. The scene was so ludicrous that he could not repress a smile, which was observed by Evan, whose choleric temper fired up instantly at the supposed affront.

* We cannot warrant the purity of the author's Welsh. Ed.

'What th' devil you grinning at, look you?'

'Did I smile? I really beg your pardon; but I am quite sure I was not "grinning," as you call it.'

'You did, sir; you grinned like—like Cheshire cat, sir. I appeal to th' gen'lmen present. You've 'sulted me, sir—'sulted me grossly. Name's Jones; very good name; 'scendant of Llewellyn; and I 'mand 'sfaction of a gen'lman.'

'My name is Jones too, though I haven't the honour of being a descendant of Llewellyn. There is my card, sir; and if when you come to your sober senses you desire to apologise for your unseemly behaviour, I shall be happy to see you.'

Evan's right-hand neighbour thrust the card, which bore the inscription

MR. OWEN JONES,
99 Winslow-square,
Belgravia, S. W.

into Evan's waistcoat-pocket, and the owner, by no means desirous of being involved in an after-dinner brawl, moved away to another part of the table. By dint of a little humouring, those around managed to soothe the fiery Evan into comparative tranquillity, and after a few more desultory observations, wherein his descent from Llewellyn still played a prominent part, he leant back in his chair, and was speedily fast asleep.

The toasts came to an end at last, the bards packed up their harps, and the last of the guests departed, leaving Evan Jones still sound asleep in his chair. A council of waiters was held over the slumbering hero, and endeavours were made to rouse him. They shook him, they punched him—but all in vain. He couldn't, or he wouldn't, wake up. They suc-

ceeded in getting out of him that his name was Jones, but to a further inquiry as to where he lived he only murmured 'scendant of Llewellyn,' and relapsed again into still deeper slumbers.

'You'll have to give him a shake-down among the empty bottles, William,' said one.

'Not if I know it,' replied the head-waiter. 'He might wake up in the night and walk off with the spoons. No, we must find out where he lives, somehow. Some of you just look in his pockets, will you? Perhaps the gent has a card-case about him.'

No sooner said than done.

'Here's a card,' said one, diving into Evan's waistcoat-pocket. "'Mr. Owen Jones, 99 Winslow-square.'"

'That's him right enough; he said his name was Jones. He don't look much like a Winslow-square sort, does he? But there's no accounting for these Welsh gents. Just as well he had his pasteboard about him, though, wasn't it? or he wouldn't have got home to-night.'

* * * *

It was a little after eleven o'clock when a four-wheel cab drove up to the door of No. 99 Winslow-square.

'This is Mr. Jones's, ain't it?' said the cabman to the smart parlour-maid who answered his knock at the door.

'Yes, this is Mr. Jones's,' answered the maid.

'That's the name right enough. Here's the card they give me: "Mr. Owen Jones, No. 99." Well, look here, miss, I've brought your master from the Welsh dinner. He've been enjoying of his wine a goodish bit, I should say, and I can't wake him up nohow.'

'You don't mean to say he's taken too much?'

'Well, miss, that depends. I

don't think myself, in a general way, a genelman *can* take too much; the more the merrier, *I* says. But he's pretty far gone, anyhow.'

The maid rushed in to her mistress, who was sitting in the dining-room.

'O ma'am, here's master come back in a cab from the Welsh dinner, and the cabman says he's fast asleep and quite tosticated.'

'Nonsense, Mary!' said her mistress angrily, and advancing into the hall; 'there must be some mistake.'

'No mistake, me'm,' said the cabman, touching his hat respectfully; 'I've brought the gent from the Welsh dinner, and here's his card.'

'Good heavens!' said Mrs. Jones, recognising her husband's card, 'it is too true. O dear, however shall I survive this shocking disgrace? Mary, go downstairs; I know I can rely upon you not to say a word of this dreadful misfortune to the other servants.'

Mary retired accordingly, and Mrs. Jones continued:

'Cabman, I must ask you to assist Mr. Jones up to his bedroom; it is the front room on the first floor; you will find the gas ready lighted. I can give you no help; for I think it would kill me to see him in such a condition.'

'Lor, don't take on so, ma'am,' said the cabman good-naturedly; 'it ain't nothing when you're used to it. Why, some o' them nobs does it every night. My old horse'll stand as steady as a church, and I'll have the genelman upstairs in a jiffy.'

Poor Mrs. Jones returned into the dining-room, holding her handkerchief to her eyes; and after a moment's pause she was made aware, by a sort of scuffling in the passage, accompanied by ex-

clamations of 'Wo-ho,' 'Hold up,' and other ejaculations of a horsey nature, that the cabman was assisting Mr. Jones up-stairs. After an interval of about ten minutes, which seemed an age, he reappeared at the dining-room door, and said, in a confidential manner,

'I've got the gent into bed quite comfortable, mum. He was a little orkard to undress, but I done him at last, proper; and he's sleeping like a babby.'

Mrs. Jones dismissed the man with a fee beyond his wildest expectations, and resumed her seat, feeling as if her peace of mind was for ever lost. She felt that she never could have the same respect for her husband again. He, who had always been a model of all that was dignified and gentlemanly, a very pattern husband, to come home helplessly drunk from a tavern-dinner! It was incredible; and yet the fact was beyond question. Surely there must be some mystery about the matter. Could he be ill? But no; he had never been in better health than when he left her a few hours previously, and to send for a doctor would only be to publish his disgrace. Could his wine have been drugged? But surely at a public dinner, at a first-rate place of entertainment, this was equally out of the question. There seemed no alternative but to suppose that, carried away by the excitement of the occasion, Mr. Jones had fallen into one of those sudden frailties to which poor human nature, even that of the noblest, is subject. At first the weeping wife had felt as if the offence was beyond all pardon; but gradually a softer feeling came over her, and she felt that, though the wrong could never be forgotten, it might in time be possible to forgive it. And then she mentally rehearsed the painful

scene which would take place between herself and her erring husband on his return to consciousness and self-respect; and she had just arranged a few little speeches, to be spoken more in sorrow than in anger, when suddenly a latch-key was heard in the door, and in walked Mr. Jones himself, calm and unruffled, without a hair out of place, or a crease on his snowy shirt-front. Mrs. Jones gazed at him a moment, scarcely believing her own eyes.

'Owen!—and *sober!*' she exclaimed; then flung herself into his arms, and went into a fit of decided hysterics.

'My darling wife, what on earth is the matter?'

'O Owen, I am *so* thankful,' said the little wife, as soon as her sobs would let her speak—'I am so thankful. But, then, who is the man in our bed?'

'The man in *our bed!*' said Mr. Jones. 'Whatever do you mean?'

'O Owen dear, you can't tell what I have gone through. A cab came half an hour ago, and brought you home from the dinner; at least the cabman said it was you, very tipsy and fast asleep, and he had your card; and so I told him to put you—I mean to say him—in our room, and there he is now.'

'The devil he is!' said Mr. Jones. 'I must have a look at this double of mine;' and seizing a candle, he strode up-stairs. Presently he again entered the room.

'I think I see how the mistake happened,' said he. 'This fellow up-stairs was at the dinner to-night, and had had more than was good for him at an early period of the evening. He was rather rude to me; but it was no use to be angry with a man in such a condition: so I merely handed him my card, and told him when he returned to his senses he might

come and apologise, though I can't say I had much expectation that he would. What became of him afterwards I can't say. I smoked a cigar with our friend Griffiths, and then walked leisurely home. Meanwhile I suppose this fellow was too drunk to answer for himself; and finding my card about him, they assumed it was his own, and sent him here accordingly. The only thing that puzzles me is that *you* didn't find out the mistake.'

'Well, dear, to tell you the truth, I was so shocked and horrified that you should be, as I supposed, in such a condition, that I would not even see you, or let Mary do so either; so I sent her down-stairs, and told the cabman to take the wretched man up to our room. But whatever shall we do now? The idea of a filthy drunken wretch in our bed! It's too horrible.'

'We mustn't be too hard upon him, dear. I could see at a glance that he was one of our poorer brethren; I daresay a hard-working sober man enough in a general way, but the temptation of a good dinner and unlimited liquor was too much for him. Besides, dear, we must consider the occasion. It is the immemorial privilege of every Welshman to get drunk, if he likes, on St. David's Day. Some of us waive it, but that's not to the purpose. We must move into the spare room for to-night, that's all. You had better give Mary orders accordingly; and at the same time it will be as well to restore my blackened character by showing her that I am not quite so far gone as she imagines.'

Mrs. Jones rang the bell.

'O Owen,' she said, kissing him fondly, and still wavering between smiles and tears, 'it is such a relief, I can't tell you. I am so thankful it wasn't you.'

Mary's face, when she opened the door, was a picture.

'Lor, ma'am! Lor, sir!' she said, looking from one to the other.

'It is all right, Mary,' said her master. 'You will be relieved to hear that the gentleman up-stairs is another Mr. Jones. There has been a little mistake, that's all; and your mistress and I are going to sleep in the spare room.'

CHAPTER III.

EVAN JONES woke on the morning following the eventful dinner hot and feverish, with a tremendous headache and an agonising feeling of thirst.

'O, my poor head!' he groaned. 'Betsy, my gal,' imagining his wife was beside him, 'for mercy's sake get out and give me a drink o' water, there's a good soul.'

There was no answer.

'I s'pose she's gone down-stairs. O, lor, my head!' and he tried to settle himself to sleep again, but his parched throat was unbearable. 'I must have a drink of water, if I die for it,' and he unwillingly opened his eyes, and dragged himself into a sitting position. 'Hallo!' he exclaimed, as his eyes fell on his unaccustomed surroundings. 'Where the deuce have I got to, and how on earth did I come here? Why, it's like a fairy tale. I must be a nobleman in disguise, or one of them foundling hospital chaps come into a fortune. Jones, you old fool, you're dreaming! I ain't, though. Lor, what a bed! and lace curtains and marble tables; and what a lot o' looking-glasses! 'Pon my word, I should like never to get up any more. I must have a glass of water, though. Ah!

that's just heavenly. Now let me think a bit. How did I come here? Let's see, what was yesterday? Yes, it must have been yesterday that I went to the Welsh dinner. I remember going, but I don't remember coming away; and, judging from my head this morning, I'm afraid I must have been uncommon screwed. And I haven't been home all night. My eyes, what'll Betsy say? I shall never hear the last of it to my dying day.'

At this moment our hero's reflections were interrupted by a knock at the chamber-door.

'Come in!' he shouted incautiously; 'at least, no; don't come in—I mean, what is it?'

The voice of Mary, the parlour-maid, replied,

'Master's compliments, and he says breakfast is ready for you, sir, whenever you can come down-stairs.'

'My respects to your master, and I'll be down directly, miss,' answered Jones.

'Well, that's a comfort, anyhow,' he soliloquised, 'for, 'pon my word, I didn't know whether I mightn't be given in custody for sleeping in other people's beds under false pretences; or embezzling another gent's house, or something of that sort. How the deuce did I get here, that's what beats me!'

Still vainly trying to solve the enigma, Evan made a hurried toilet, and finally, with his head still aching as if it would split, and looking a wreck of yesterday's greatness, he left the room, and crept softly down-stairs. The evidences of wealth and luxury on every side, so unlike his own humble belongings, quite awed him, and having found his way down, he would not venture into any of the sitting-rooms, but modestly took his seat on a chair

in the hall, and waited for the development of events. Here he was found after a few moments by Mr. Owen Jones, who wished him a friendly good-morning.

'I've seen you somewhere, I know, sir,' said Evan; 'but I can't for the life of me tell where.'

'Can't you?' said his host, smiling. 'We were both at the Welsh dinner last night, and one of us took a little too much.'

A light suddenly flashed across Evan's mind.

'I remember now, sir; I'm afraid I was very rude to you.'

'Well, you were a little plain-spoken, and I gave you my card, and told you if you wished to apologise, you would know where to find me. I must say I didn't expect you would have come quite so soon, though. The fact is, you were brought here by the mistake of a cabman, who supposed my card was your own.'

'I'm sure I humbly beg your pardon, sir,' said poor Evan, completely crestfallen. 'I can't think how I came so to disgrace myself; but to tell you the truth, sir, I'd had to pinch a bit to buy my ticket, and all day yesterday I hadn't tasted bit or sup since breakfast, and when it came to dinner-time I was that faint and weak that the very first glass seemed to set my head all swimming like. I'd let it go too long, sir, that's what it was. I humbly ask your pardon, I'm sure, for the trouble I've caused, and I thank you kindly for giving me a night's shelter. I feel I don't deserve your kindness, sir; but I'm grateful, I assure you.'

And with tears in his eyes Evan moved humbly to the hall-door to depart.

'No, no,' said Mr. Owen Jones; 'you mustn't think of going without your breakfast. We are all Welsh here; and if a brother

Welshman does take a glass too much on St. David's Day, we know how to make allowances for him. Come, step in here. We have had breakfast an hour ago; but Mrs. Jones is waiting to give you yours.'

Looking very shamefaced and repentant, Evan Jones followed his namesake into the breakfast-parlour, where Mrs. Jones, who had heard his humble confession and apology, gave him a kindly greeting, and he was soon seated before a snowy table-cloth and, as well as his headache would let him, enjoying a plenteous repast. During the meal his entertainers quietly drew him out, and were speedily behind the scenes as to his daily life and his hard struggles to keep the wolf from the door; and when he finally took his leave, a well-filled basket was waiting for him in the hall to take home as a present to the children. Nor was this by any means the

last which found its way to the same quarter, sent by the same friendly hands; and I am sorry to say that of all days, that held in the highest veneration by the little Joneses is 'the day when papa got so dreadfully tipsy at the Welsh dinner.'

* * * *

I feel that there *must* be a moral to this story somewhere, but I can't quite see where it lies. You can't call it exactly a temperance story, because, you observe, Evan Jones got a good night's lodging and made a couple of kind friends by getting drunk—which is not poetical justice by any means. After much anxious consideration, the only safe moral I can see is, that a married lady should never order any gentleman, however tipsy, to be put into her own bed without making *quite* sure, in the first place, that he is the gentleman who rightfully belongs to her.

ANGELO J. LEWIS.



DRAWING-ROOM AMUSEMENTS.

INCOGNITO ; OR WHO AM I ?

ONE of the players is sent out of hearing distance, while the rest fix upon some well-known character of history or fiction whom he is to be taken to represent. On returning, he is addressed by each person in turn with allusions appropriate to the character he is supposed to personify. Usually each one of the company addresses the victim as he best pleases. It will be found, however, to be a great improvement upon the ordinary method if those who remain in the room choose for themselves each a character contemporary and connected with that which the absentee is intended to represent. When the principal character is taken from fiction, the rest must be taken, of course, from the same work. Suppose, for instance, that the character chosen for the absentee is that of Faust, then the parts of Marguerite, Valentine, Mephistopheles, Siebel, Dame Martha, &c., should be assumed by each of the company. On the excluded one returning to the room he will be addressed by Marguerite: 'You are my ideal of a handsome student and a gallant lover. I trust you with my heart, and would with my life, for never were woman's love and faith like mine. And yet when, as we wander through the garden, I look into your eyes, a strange fear and a dreadful foreboding come over me. I have but the truth and tenderness of woman; you have the strength and intellect of man, if not of something more than man, to rely upon. Spare me, then, and we may yet live and die happily.' Un-

able to make much out of this, the guesser answers, it may be, that the lady does him too much honour in her sentiments, and goes on to the next, which happens, perhaps, to be Dame Martha, who says, 'I have my doubts about you young men, and my opinion is that you are no better than you ought to be and a good deal worse than you might be. If I ever marry again, it will be to a tall, slender, fair-spoken gentleman who has already shown his affection for me, and I hope my charge may be as fortunate as I shall.' 'I hope so too,' says the guesser, whom Mephistopheles next addresses: 'I am a friend to you such as few men possess, and, although I spring from the lower classes, you will find me able to add to the inestimable gifts which I have already bestowed upon you others of even greater value. Such, however, is the ingratitude of mortal man, that I hardly expect an adequate return for all this, and I foresee that you may even make use of the advantages I have conferred upon you to find out a tricky way of evading the payment of my stipulated reward, poor even as it is.' The guesser will possibly by this time have discovered the character he represents, and should henceforth answer each person appropriately, and if he pleases sarcastically. 'For you, my friend,' he will say to Mephistopheles, 'I forgive you. You are but acting up to your character, and, for once, are quite as black as you have ever been painted; but what has this gentleman to say?' Supposing the next to be Valentine, he will answer, 'I have to say that I will

exact satisfaction for the wrong done to me, and that the insult placed upon our house can only be washed out in blood.' 'Very well,' returns the guesser; 'I can refuse nothing, not even satisfaction, to the brother of the woman I adore; but I doubt if it will improve matters, and my belief is that if—doing some violence to the story—you will allow me to repent now, I shall get off with one curse the less, and my friend there will lose one soul the more.' This sort of thing must not, however, be too much prolonged, as the greater part of the interest has gone when once the guesser has shown that he has discovered the character he represents.

THE MUSICAL ORACLE.

Like all oracles of which we have any account, this requires a certain amount of intelligence both in the working and the interpretation of it. One of the players having been sent out of the room, the rest arrange among themselves some task that he is to perform, and, a player being seated at the piano, on his readmission the task is to be indicated to him by the music played and the manner of playing it. Suppose, for instance, he is to be required to walk three times round the table, and kiss the hand of a particular lady. On entering, the victim will be saluted with 'All round my hat,' played piano. He will probably look for a hat, and, finding none, will try going round on his own axis, on which the music will die away almost to silence. He then approaches the table, when the strain swells louder; he takes a few steps—louder still; and now recognising what is required, he paces round once to the air, and is about to go away, when the tune keeps on persistently and loudly, until he guesses that he has to go round the table again. Having completed the three turns, he waits for the next

musical indication, which perhaps comes in the shape of 'How happy could I be with either,' changing to 'Nora Creina.' He then perceives that it must be the question of a lady, and passes in front of all those in the room—the music becoming fainter as he leaves the lady selected and louder as he approaches her. At length he stands before her, and the piano strikes up 'When the heart of a man is oppressed with care.' He offers her his arm, but she makes no move. He kneels, when the music stops abruptly. He rises again, and the music begins with 'The Kiss.' He attempts a kiss on the cheek, when he is met with an awful chord and clatter. He then tries the hand, when the music increases in loudness and winds up with a grand flourish, and, if he has acquitted himself intelligently, he obtains the applause of the company.

HOW, WHEN, AND WHERE.

This is a game which requires absolutely 'no preparation,' and which may be played driving home from a ball, or under any other depressing circumstances in which the want of amusement is most keenly felt. It is another of the guessing games, but a word can easily be settled by the company in whispers, the guesser being bound to stop his ears, and being put upon his honour not to listen. The word chosen must be a noun or a proper name, and as it is to be guessed by the answers returned to the three questions, 'How, when, and where do you like it?' it must be twisted and turned about, and put to every contradictory use of which it is capable. Suppose, for instance, the word chosen to be flame, the gentleman asks each of the company, 'How do you like it?' and gets for answers successively, 'Bright,' 'Old,' 'New,' 'Steady,' 'Put out,' 'Tender,' 'Smokeless.' Gaining no light from

this, he then asks, 'When do you like it?' and is told, 'When I am cold,' 'When I am warm,' 'After dinner.' He next inquires, 'Where do you like it?' and is told, 'In Celia's breast,' 'Before my slippers,' 'Behind iron bars,' and so on. At the end of each series of questions the victim is allowed one guess, and if at the conclusion of all the answers he has not succeeded in guessing aright, he must begin again. If, however, he detects the word, another must be appointed to take his place. Punning is quite allowable, and even most laudable, in this game; and it is a great advantage to select a word pronounced like some other, even though it differ from it in spelling. Thus if Wales be the word chosen, it will be seen that the most contradictory answers may be given to the same question. To 'How do you like it?' the answer may be, 'Very well in dumb show,' 'Stuffed,' 'As a principal-ity,' 'As an animal rather than a vegetable production.' 'When do you like it?' 'In autumn,' 'Never,' 'When it spouts,' 'When all else fails,' 'Where do you like it?' 'In Iceland,' 'On the back of a garrotter,' 'Next to a prince,' &c. If the name of one of the company will bear punning, much amusement may be derived from it.

HOME-TRUTHS.

A diplomatic game, showing how the same fact is capable, if properly manipulated, of being drawn to any inferences, however opposite they may be. One of the company—supposing it to be a lady—informs her neighbour that she wishes she were some animal or object supremely disagreeable, and asks if he knows why. The person addressed is bound to give a passable reason, and at the same time to avoid paying a compliment in giving it. The lady then asks the person on her right the same question, and in

this case must be answered with a compliment. For instance, the lady may say, 'I should like to be a coal-scuttle; can you tell me why?' The first person addressed may answer, 'Because you are less fair than useful, and your heart is only fit to be burnt.' The second person, of whom the same question is asked, replies, 'Because you furnish the charm of home, and when appealed to never fail to produce a flame.' Or a gentleman may say, 'I should like to be a centipede; can you tell me why?' The first person appealed to replies, 'Because you would be the better able to run away from your creditors.' The second answers, 'In order that whenever one of your friends had not a leg to stand upon, you might lend him one of your own.' Each one of the company takes a turn at the choice, and by the time the end is reached a pretty crop of disparagement, and an equally plentiful supply of compliments, will have been obtained, between which the truth as to any particular player may be discovered.

ELEMENTS.

A most laughable and aggravating game, especially if it be struck up unexpectedly. One of the party throws a ball (it is hoped that it will be a soft one) at another, and cries at the same time one of the 'elements,' viz. 'earth,' 'air,' 'fire,' or 'water.' The thrower then counts ten aloud, and before he has got to the end the person at whom the ball has been thrown must name some animal inhabiting the element in question. The fun of the game consists in the almost inevitable tendency to name an animal belonging to one of the other elements—a tendency which is much increased by the flurry into which the player generally gets as the number ten is approached. No animal must be named a second

time, and it will be found that the difficulty of finding inhabitants for the different elements after the first five or six have been exhausted is something incredible. Any player who fails to name an animal, or who names one inhabiting another element than that mentioned, pays a forfeit, and has to throw the ball until he can get relieved in turn. The great object is to catch somebody who happens to be looking another way, and throwing the ball at him or her, to cry, 'Air—one, two, three, four,' &c.; when it is ten to one that the person addressed in the hurry names 'sheep,' or 'elephant,' or some other such wingless creature. When 'fire' is named, the person at whom the ball is thrown must remain silent, for the obvious reason that there is no animal which exists in fire except the salamander, which, being a case not well authenticated, is not received among the authorised animals of the game.

THE FAMILY COACH.

This will be found to be, if fairly managed, a very stirring and amusing game. The company is seated in a circle, and one who is chosen historian of the 'Family Coach' goes round the circle, and learns from each one what particular portion of the vehicle, or what pertaining to it, he or she chooses to represent. One chooses the linch-pin, another the fore-wheels, another the horses, another the coachman, and so on. He then seats himself in the centre of the circle, and tells as good a tale as he can invent of the adventures of the coach, and whenever any part of it is mentioned the person representing it must rise and turn round rapidly, and sit down again. When the word 'coach' occurs the whole of the company must turn round. It is a cunning and successful device of some historians to mention the same portion of the

coach three or four times running, which makes a kind of teetotum of the person representing it, which is not without a certain charm (especially if it be a gentleman of portly presence inclined to giddiness), and will probably result either in amusement or forfeits. Any player who fails to revolve in proper form whenever his own part of the coach is mentioned pays a forfeit, only to be redeemed by one of the varieties of the '*peine forte et dure*' which are given further on. Here is a story: 'The Marchioness of Pumphandle, wishing to advance herself and her daughters in the world, one day resolved to go to court, and as railways were not then invented was perforce obliged to set out in the family (here everybody starts up to turn round) vehicle—give me forfeits, please, all those who have got up. Sending then for the coachman (coachman revolves) —"Coachman (revolves again), coachman" (revolves again), said she, "if your fore-wheels (fore-wheels revolves), your linch-pins (linch-pins revolves), your traces (traces revolves), and the rest are all in proper order, I should like to go to court in the Family Coach (all revolve)." On the next Drawing-room day, then, off they set, the Marchioness of Pumphandle looking as lovely as diamonds and paint could make her by daylight, while her daughters positively radiated beams of beauty through the windows (windows revolves) at the ill-fated pedestrians. But they no sooner got to the top of St. James's-street than one of the horses (horses revolves) trod on a piece of orange-peel, fell down, broke the pole (pole revolves), and then the linch-pins (linch-pins revolves) coming out by capillary attraction the wheels (wheels revolves) came off, the coach (all revolve) upset, the marchioness and

her daughters were thrown into a heap of mud, and had to walk home through Piccadilly in peach-coloured satin, without ever having seen the Queen after all.'

POST.

Each player chooses a town which he or she will represent, and all remain seated in a circle, except one, who stands in the middle. It will be found necessary to have the names of the towns chosen written down to prevent confusion. The victim in the middle, to whom the paper is given, and who assumes the dignity of Postmaster-general, suddenly calls out, for instance, 'The post is going—from Bagdad to Northampton.' The players representing those towns must change places at once, and the object of the victim is to capture during the change one of the places left vacant, when the ousted player becomes in turn the victim. Once in six times he is allowed to call a 'general post,' when everybody must change places. This game is bustling, and is capable of amusing for a short time; but it has hardly 'backbone' enough to make it a very great favourite.

CONSEQUENCES.

A well-known and favourite game, which is played on this wise. Each of the company has a strip of paper (note-paper torn in halves length-wise answers the purpose well) and a pencil. Each one then writes an adjective at the top of the slip and folds it backwards, and that which is written being thus concealed, each slip is handed on to the next person. The next thing is to write the name of a gentleman, after which the slips are passed on again. Then comes another adjective; then the 'name of a lady;' next, 'Where they met,' 'What they were doing,' 'What he said to her,' 'What

she said to him,' 'What he did to her,' 'What she did to him,' 'What the consequences were,' and finally, 'What the world said,' the slips being turned down and passed on between the writing of each circumstance in the history. When it is all written the slips are read aloud by one of the company specially selected for that purpose, and as they are necessarily made up of the most incongruous scraps, the effect is naturally supremely ludicrous. Here is a faithful copy of one such slip. 'The dove-eyed' Mr. — (names suppressed for the credit of society) met the 'scraggy but muscular' Miss — 'on the knife-board of a twopenny bus.' 'They were coming back from Cremorne.' He said to her, 'Fly to the desert; fly with me, my life, my soul, my all to be.' She said to him, 'The fact of the tides being influenced by lunar attraction proves that Mr. Mill is right in objecting to exclusion from the franchise on account of sex.' He 'knelt at her feet, and vowed eternal constancy to her mild havannahs.' She 'at once landed her left on his dexter optic.' The consequences were 'that the chances of municipal reform, and a supply of pure water for the metropolis, were greatly increased;' and the world said, 'The man who lays his hand upon a woman, save in the way of kindness, is unworthy of the name of coward.'

COLLABORATION.

This is a game of the same nature as the last, but much less generally known, although it is infinitely more amusing. Paper and pencils are to be given as before to the company, and each of them on the upper part of the slip is to draw a head. Let not the unartistic be frightened at this, for it is not necessary to display any knowledge of drawing; on the contrary,

the absence of it rather adds to than diminishes the fun of the game. The most effective heads to draw are naturally exaggerated caricatures of any of the company present. The head having been achieved as effectively as may be, the slip is folded back just above the ends of the two lines forming the neck, and handed to a person sitting next, who fills in a body from the neck down to the legs, folding the slip again immediately above the ends of the lines forming the body, and again hands it on. The third person then adds legs according to his or her fancy, writing the name at the bottom thereof, and the whole result will be found to be the most laughable specimen of ideal humanity conceivable.

SILENCE.

A pastime more amusing, perhaps, than intellectual, but not, therefore, to be despised. It is advisable to play this after one of the foregoing games—the last, for instance—as it makes a contrast with them, and so militates against monotony, that deadliest foe to amusement. There is too the additional advantage that the players will be already seated. This, then, being the case, one of them in the most solemn manner, and with a perfectly grave face, softly slaps the face of his right-hand neighbour—whether lady or gentleman—who in turn repeats the operation upon the next. Thus it goes round the circle, the most profound silence being observed, until it reaches the leader again. He then gives his neighbour a box on the ear on each side (I trust that nobody will be tempted to box hard); and this too is repeated round the circle, possibly amid some faint titterings, which the leader must suppress with all the weight of his authority and much severity of countenance. That concluded, he

next proceeds softly to pull his neighbour's ear, the circle still, it is hoped, sufficiently restraining itself to observe the perfect silence which is indispensable to the game. This having been duly completed, he goes on to pull the nose of the unhappy right-hand neighbour, upon whom all the experiments are first tried. If the good sense and proper feeling of the players is such that this proceeding, suffered and inflicted in turn by each, goes round the room without inextinguishable roars of laughter, the circle may be congratulated upon being the first which ever succeeded in playing the game according to the canon, and as it should be played.

HUNT THE RING.

This is the more possible form of hunt the slipper. A circle is made, and a piece of tape or string is obtained sufficiently long to reach all round on the inside. A ring is then slipped on to it, and the two ends are tied together. Each of the players takes hold of the tape or string with both hands, and the person whom lot or choice has marked out for the victim, standing in the middle of the circle, is next made to turn round three times (without shutting his eyes or submitting to any other disadvantage), and is then let loose to hunt for the ring. The object of the rest of the players is, of course, to prevent his catching it, and they pass it from one to the other, covering it with their hands as rapidly as possible. If a constant backward and forward motion of the hand is kept up, it will be found extremely difficult to discover where it is so as to stop it before it disappears. As in the fairy tale, it will often be seen to gleam, but only to disappear when an effort is made to grasp it, and the victim's only chance is the greatest rapidity in opening and

shutting every hand round the circle, to each of which he has immediate access so soon as he has touched it. It is unfair to pass the ring from under a hand after it has been touched and before it has been opened, and the player in whose possession it is finally found becomes in turn the victim. This is a very merry and most entertaining game.

MUFTI.

This is probably the best, as it certainly is the most possible, of all the games into which agility enters. A number of chairs, less by one than the number of players, are placed in a long row, the chairs facing alternately in opposite directions. The players then proceed to march round the chairs in single file and to the sound of music, and continue to do so as long as the music is played. As soon as ever the music stops every player must sit down, and as there is one chair too few, one person is necessarily left without a seat, and is thereby put out of the game. A chair is then taken away, and the players resume their march as before, a player and a chair being taken off at each sitting. The fun of the thing, as may be imagined, depends almost entirely upon the manner in which the music is managed, for the deceptions which may be practised by the musician are infinite. He may play a short air through and allow it to die away on the last note. Every one of the players immediately captures a seat, but only to be urged on again by the music being continued in a faster strain than before; and as the musician will not stop in ordinary places, so he must be careful to stop in unexpected places, the more abruptly the better, and he will be rewarded by seeing a

most amusing scramble for the chairs. The field will get gradually smaller and smaller, till nothing is left but one chair and two players; and here the skill of the musician will be shown by keeping them marching for as long a period as possible, and finally break off just as they are both passing the front of the chair, when they will, in all probability, sit down on each other. It is not fair to use ottomans or stools in this game, because the principle of it is that only one person should be able to occupy the seat at a time, and chairs with backs to them are therefore indispensable. It is necessary, too, that authority should be exerted to keep the players marching fairly as long as the music is going on.

CORBILLON.

A French game, which can only be played in that language. It is inserted here because it is very popular in French châteaux, and may serve to amuse in some English houses, besides improving the French of the young people. One of the players says, '*Je te donne mon corbillon—qu'y met-t-on?*' And the person to whom the offer is addressed is bound to answer with some word ending equally in 'on,' of which there are many hundreds in the language, such as '*un cornichon,*' '*du jambon,*' '*un feuilletton,*' '*un carton,*' '*du cresson,*' &c. Those who fail to supply a word before ten can be counted, or repeat one that has already been given, must pay forfeit. This game was already old in the time of Molière, who makes one of his characters answer the question with, '*Tarte à la crème.*' It becomes somewhat monotonous after a short time, but is useful in the manner above indicated, and as an exercise of ingenuity.

WAITING FOR THE GENTLEMEN.

I.

'His name is here, 'tis on my card!' 'See, here on *mine* 'tis writ;
"First come first served," the proverb says.' 'I care not *that* for it!
That proverbs contradict themselves must surely be confess'd;
"First come first served," indeed! No, no! Our "second thoughts are
best."

II.

'*I'll* not give way! Best dance of all—last round one of to-night!
'Champagne, *perhaps*, may be the cause why bright eyes are *so*
bright!'

* * * * *

'*I'll* not give way—not that I *care*! My lord's engaged to *me*;
And though it is but for a dance, I'll *never* slighted be!'

III.

Ladies, beware! Behind you lurks a sweet snake in the grass,
Who smiles to see that things have come to such a pretty pass:
And thinks, whilst each of you looks scorn into the other's eyes,
That she will rake you rear and flank, and carry off the prize!

IV.

O blushing Rose, O Lily fair, to 'spar' for fickle man
Is *infra dig*. Wipe out his name, and let her catch who can;
A coxcomb he must surely be who thinks that he can choose
Betwixt two girls. Be wise in time, and *both* of you refuse!

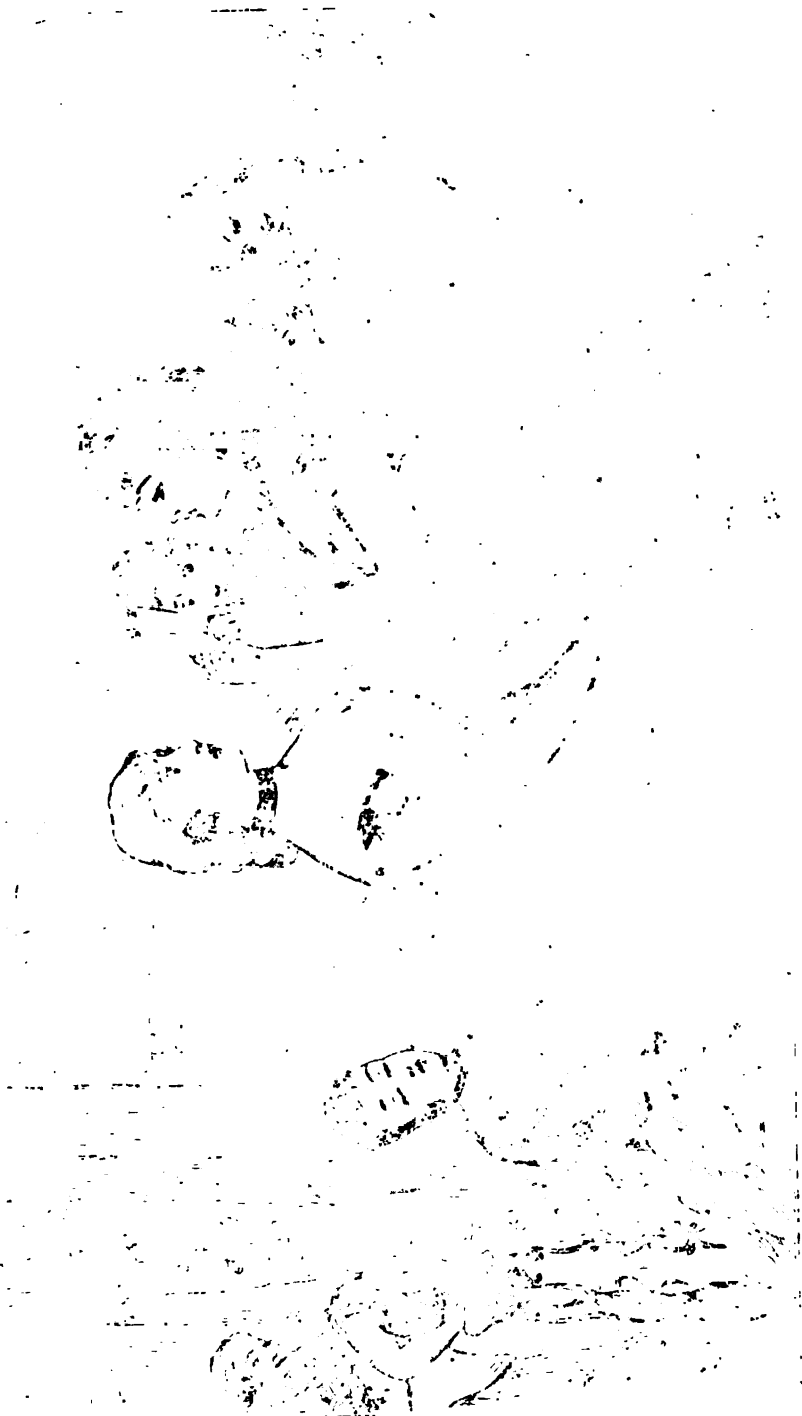
V.

Read him a lesson, shallow fop! In love and war all's fair.
'Waste not your sweetness,' sweet ones, on 'his lordship's' 'desert air.'
Title and money ne'er the scale in beauty's eyes should turn;
The *man*, the *man*, should be the prize that ladies' war should earn!

VI.

Neither give way? Well, be it so! 'Good fish are in the sea
As ever out of it were ta'en.' Come, cease your rivalry.
The dowagers are half asleep, the waiting linkboys call;
That's right, *that's* right! Join issue, girls, and show 'my lord' the
wall!

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.



WALTZ FOR THE GENTLEMEN.

I.

He: "Why card? 'So, here on *mine* 'tis writ;
 "The proverb says." "I care not *that* for it!
 "The *ones* themselves must surely be confess'd;
 "I care not *that* for it! No, not for *second* thought!"

II.

He: "The dance of all - last round, one at to night!"
 "May be the cause why bright eyes are so

* * * *

He: "I *me!* My lord's engaged to *me!*
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"

III.

He: "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"

IV.

He: "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"

V.

He: "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"

VI.

He: "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"
 "I care not *that* for it! I'll *never* slighted be!"

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.



SOCIAL CONTRITEMPS:
AFTER SUPPER—WAITING FOR THE GENTLEMEN.

See the Verses.



MODERN RUSSIA.

MR. MACKENZIE WALLACE's book on Russia* had been long expected by the initiated; and had been formally recommended to the British public in the course of the very interesting lectures delivered in November last, in different quarters and institutions of London, by Mr. W. R. S. Ralston. The same accomplished Russian scholar contributed a somewhat lengthy communication to the *Athenæum* for November 4th, 1876, in which he fore-announced the various excellences of the work destined to be published some two months subsequently. There might seem to have been an element of peril in the unqualified praise which Mr. Ralston bestowed on the characteristics of volumes still in embryo; for it elevated to the highest degree the standard by which the literary result of Mr. Wallace's labours was to be judged.

The judicious boldness of Mr. Ralston's encomiums has, however, been completely vindicated; and *Russia* has been received with a consensus of unbounded praise and gratitude by the most trusted organs of critical opinion. How far it has met with popular appreciation may be left to be decided by the fact that the two stately volumes at present in our hands are already to be counted as of the third edition.

Mr. Wallace's book has come, in fact, to supply a desideratum;

for the works on Russia of recent publication have been, when compared with the patiently acquired information of the present one, rather unsatisfactory. Russia is not a country to be known, in the various phases of its life and government, merely by confiding tourists with little knowledge of the language or of the manners the surface of which only they are in a position to describe. It is, indeed, no slight difficulty to extract information from the dwellers in Russia, whether foreigners or natives; for the former are too frequently ignorant or indifferent as to what passes beyond the sphere of their own influence and interest, whilst the latter are remarkable for their cunning reticence and their almost inveterate tendency to deceit and falsification. They are, in fact, so notorious for their mystification that Mr. Ralston, a friendly critic, has not scrupled to issue or to adopt a startling rule for acquiring knowledge about the affairs of Russia. If it is desired to ascertain the course of the public sentiment and intention of the people of that country, it is recommended that the anxious inquirer should put some half hundred of natives to the question, and, having carefully struck the average of their expressed opinions, should then form his own in the direction exactly the opposite of the aforesaid average. The increase of the hindrances and impediments which the possibility or plausibility of such a canon indicates will be the measure of thankfulness and satisfaction with which a work should be welcomed

* *Russia*. By D. Mackenzie Wallace, M.A., Member of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. Third edition. 2 vols. (Cassell, Petter, & Galpin, London, Paris, and New York, 1877.)

that bears on every page of it the stamp of authenticity. This authenticity is the result not only of the justice and acuteness of Mr. Wallace's observation, but of the constant and multiform tact which he manifested in the way of inspiring confidence. Thus he is able to acknowledge 'the assistance which was most liberally afforded him by Russians of all classes;' to whose views and opinions he was ever ready to give his careful consideration, and, whether rejecting or accepting them, to form his judgment without bias or partiality.

Mr. Wallace arrived for the first time in St. Petersburg in March 1870, with the intention of spending a few months in Russia; but he unexpectedly found so many interesting subjects of study that he remained for nearly six years, that is, to December 1875. During that period his winters were spent for the most part in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Yaroslaff; whilst the summer months were generally devoted to wandering about the country and collecting information from the local authorities, landed proprietors, merchants, priests, and peasantry. Since his return to England constant correspondence with numerous Russian friends has enabled him to follow closely what has taken place in the short interval. The pictures of Russian life are therefore those of the day of publication. In treating a subject so vast and varied, Mr. Wallace professes to have found it no easy matter to determine the topics which have most real importance, and to present them in such a manner as to convey a general idea of the country and the people. In the work before us he has selected, from his six years' accumulation of various materials concerning the past history and present condition of Russia, merely those particulars which seemed most

likely to interest the general public. He reserves for a future volume the result of his special investigation regarding more technical and political topics, as the rural commune, the various systems of agriculture, the history of the emancipation of the serfs, the present economic condition of the peasantry, the financial system, public instruction, and the recent phases of intellectual movement.

Mr. Wallace's initial chapter is naturally taken up with 'Travelling in Russia;' which, so far as it can be accomplished by railway—and during the last quarter of a century a vast network of lines has traversed the country—he declares to be tolerably comfortable, the carriages being decidedly better than in England. The rate of speed is slow, and there is a tendency to avoid the towns; probably because the railway companies, with more regard to their own profits than to the convenience of passengers, evade the relative dearth of land within municipal barriers.

'In one celebrated instance neither engineers nor railway contractors were to blame. From St. Petersburg to Moscow the locomotive runs for a distance of 400 miles, almost as "the crow" is supposed to fly, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. For fifteen weary hours the passenger in the express train looks out on forest and morass, and rarely catches sight of human habitation. Only once he perceives in the distance what may be called a town; it is Tver which has been thus favoured, not because it is a place of importance, but simply because it happened to be near the straight line. And why was the railway constructed in this extraordinary fashion? For the best of all reasons—because the Tsar so ordered it. When the preliminary survey was being made, Nicholas learned that the officers intrusted with the task—and the Minister of Ways and Roads in the number—were being influenced more by personal than technical considerations, and he determined to cut the Gordian knot in true imperial style. When the Minister laid before him the map with the intention of explaining the proposed route, he took a ruler, drew a straight line from the one terminus to the other, and remarked, in a tone that precluded all discussion,

"You will construct the line so!" And the line was so constructed—remaining to all future ages, like St. Petersburg and the Pyramids, a magnificent monument of autocratic power. . . .

The water-communication has likewise in recent years been greatly improved. On all the principal rivers there are now tolerably good steamers. Unfortunately, the climate puts serious obstructions in the way of navigation. For nearly half of the year the rivers are covered with ice, and during a great part of the open season navigation is difficult. When the ice and snow melt, the rivers overflow their banks, and lay a great part of the low-lying country under water, so that many villages can only be approached in boats; but very soon the flood subsides, and the water falls so rapidly, that by midsummer the larger steamers have great difficulty in picking their way among the sand-banks. The Neva alone—that queen of northern rivers—has at all times a plentiful supply of water.

With regard to the peculiar conveyances and methods of travel in use in districts beyond the range of steam-power by land or water, we may be content to recall to the readers of *London Society* the graphic descriptions of the adventures of 'Michael Strogoff' lately presented in these pages.

Despairing of being able to acquire the Russian language in St. Petersburg, where the ready intelligibility of French, German, and English made the first unnecessary, Mr. Wallace condemned himself to a 'voluntary exile' at Ivánofka, a picturesque village in the province or government of Novgorod.

'The peasants' huts, built on both sides of a straight road, were colourless enough, and the big church, with its five pear-shaped cupolas rising out of the bright-green roof, and its ugly belfry in the Renaissance style, was not by any means beautiful in itself; but when seen from a little distance, especially in the soft evening twilight, the whole might have been made the subject of a very pleasing picture. From the point which a landscape-painter would naturally have chosen, the foreground was formed by a meadow, through which flowed sluggishly a meandering stream. On a bit of rising ground to the right, and half concealed by an intervening cluster of old rich-coloured pines, stood the manor-house—a big box-shaped, whitewashed building, with a verandah in front, over-

looking a small plot that might some day become a flower-garden. To the left of this stood the village, the houses grouping prettily with the big church, and a little further in this direction was an avenue of graceful birches. On the extreme left were fields, bounded by a dark border of fir-trees. Could the spectator have raised himself a few hundred feet from the ground, he would have seen that there were fields beyond the village; and that the whole of this agricultural oasis was imbedded in a forest stretching in all directions as far as the eye could reach.'

The principal personage in this community was Karl Karl'itch, the steward, who, originally Karl Schmidt, the son of a well-to-do *Bauer* in the Prussian village of Schönhausen, had been imported by the proprietor to Ivánofka with a view to the improvement of the current system of Russian agriculture. One of the first effects of the Emancipation Edict was to produce in the peasants a spirit of ignorance and lazy independence.

'Since that time things had gradually improved. The peasants had discovered that they could not support themselves and pay their taxes from the land ceded to them, and had accordingly consented to till the proprietor's fields for a moderate compensation. "These two years," said Karl Karl'itch to me, with an air of honest self-satisfaction, "I have been able, after paying all expenses, to transmit little sums to the young master in St. Petersburg. It was certainly not much, but it shows that things are better than they were. Still it is hard uphill work. The peasants have not been improved by liberty. They now work less and drink more than they did in the times of serfage; and if you say a word to them they'll go away, and not work for you at all." Here Karl Karl'itch indemnified himself for his recent self-control in the presence of his workers by using a series of the strongest epithets which the combined languages of his native and of his adopted country could supply. "But laziness and drunkenness are not their only faults. They let their cattle wander into our fields, and never lose an opportunity of stealing firewood from the forest."

"But you have now for such matters the rural justices of the peace," I ventured to suggest.

"The justices of the peace!" . . . Here Karl Karl'itch used an inelegant expression, which showed plainly that he was no unqualified admirer of the new judicial institutions. "What is the use

of applying to the justices? The nearest one lives six miles off; and when I go to him he evidently tries to make me lose as much time as possible. I am sure to lose nearly a whole day, and at the end of it I may find that I have got nothing for my pains. These justices always try to find some excuse for the peasant; and when they do condemn, by way of exception, the affair does not end there. There are constantly a number of pettifogging practitioners prowling about—for the most part rascally scribes who have been dismissed from the public offices for pilfering and extorting too openly—and they are always ready to whisper to the peasant that he should appeal. The peasant knows that the decision is just; but he is easily persuaded that by appealing to the Monthly Sessions he gets another draw in the lottery, and may perhaps draw a prize. He lets the rascally scribe, therefore, draw up an appeal for him; and I receive an invitation to attend the Session of Justices in the district town on a certain day. It is a good five-and-thirty miles to the district town, as you know; but I get up early, and arrive at eleven o'clock, the hour stated in the official notice. A crowd of peasants are hanging about the door of the court, but the only official present is the porter. I inquire of him when my case is likely to come on, and receive the laconic answer, 'How should I know?' After half an hour the secretary arrives. I repeat my question, and receive the same answer. Another half-hour passes, and one of the justices drives up in his tarantass. Perhaps he is a glib-tongued gentleman, and assures me that the proceedings will commence at once: 'Sei tchas! sei tchas!' Don't believe what the priest or the dictionary tells you about the meaning of that expression. The dictionary will tell you that it means 'immediately,' but that's all nonsense. In the mouth of a Russian it means 'in an hour,' 'next week,' 'in a year or two,' 'never,'—most commonly 'never.' Like many other words in Russian, 'sei tchas' can be understood only after long experience. A second justice drives up, and then a third. No more are required by law, but these gentlemen must first smoke several cigarettes and discuss all the local news before they begin work. At last they take their seats on the bench—a slightly elevated platform at one end of the room—behind a table covered with green baize, and the proceedings commence. My case is sure to be pretty far down on the list—the secretary takes, I believe, a malicious pleasure in watching my impatience—and before it is called the justices have to retire at least once for refreshments and cigarettes. I have to amuse myself by listening to the other cases, and some of them, I can assure you, are amusing enough. The walls of that room must be, by this time, pretty well saturated with perjury; and many of the witnesses catch at once the infection. Perhaps I

may tell you some other time a few of the amusing incidents that I have seen there. At last my case is called. It is as clear as daylight, but the rascally pettifogger is there with a long prepared speech. He holds in his hand a small volume of the codified law, and quotes paragraphs which no amount of human ingenuity can make to bear upon the subject. Perhaps the previous decision is confirmed; perhaps it is reversed; in either case, I have lost a second day, and exhausted more patience than I can conveniently spare. And something even worse may happen, as I know by experience. Once during a case of mine there was some little informality—some one inadvertently opened the door of the consulting-room when the decision was being written, or some other little incident of the sort occurred, and the rascally pettifogger complained to the Supreme Court of Revision, which is a part of the Senate. The case was all about a few roubles, but it was discussed in St. Petersburg, and afterwards tried over again by another court of justices. Now I have paid my *Lehrgeld*, and go no more to law."

"Then you must expose yourself to all kinds of extortion?"

"Not so much as you might imagine. I have my own way of dispensing justice. When I catch a peasant's horse or cow in our fields, I lock it up, and make the owner pay a ransom."

"Is it not rather dangerous," I inquired, "to take the law thus into your own hands? I have heard that the Russian justices are extremely severe against any one who has recourse to what your German jurists call *Selbsthilfe*." . . .

"I am not at all afraid of the peasants citing me before the justice. They know better. If they gave me too much trouble I could starve their cattle."

"Yes when you catch them in your fields," I remarked, taking no notice of the abrupt turn which he had given to the conversation.

"I can do it without that. You must know that, by the Emancipation Law, the peasants received arable land, but they received no pasturage. I have the whip-hand of them there."

Here is a portrait of the Batushka, or little father, the parish priest of Ivánofka:

'My reverend teacher was a tall muscular man of about forty years of age, with a full dark-brown beard, and long lank hair falling over his shoulders. The visible parts of his dress consisted of three articles—a dingy-brown robe of coarse material, buttoned closely at the neck, and descending to the ground; a wide-awake hat; and a pair of large heavy boots. As to the esoteric parts of his attire, I refrained from making investigations. His life had been an uneventful one. At an early age he had been sent to

the seminary in the chief town of the province, and had made for himself the reputation of a good average scholar. "The seminary of that time," he used to say to me, referring to that part of his life, "was not what it is now. Nowadays, the teachers talk about humanitarianism, and the boys would think that a crime had been committed against human dignity if one of them happened to be flogged. But they don't consider that human dignity is at all affected by their getting drunk, and going to—to places that I never went to. I was flogged often enough, and I don't think that I am a worse man on that account; and though I never heard then anything about pedagogical science that they talk so much about now, I'll read a bit of Latin yet with the best of them.

"When my studies were finished," said Bátushka, continuing the simple story of his life, "the Bishop found a wife for me, and I succeeded her father, who was then an old man. In that way I became priest of Ivánofka, and have remained here ever since. It is a hard life, for the parish is big, and my bit of land is not very fertile; but, praise be to God! I am healthy and strong, and get on well enough."

"You said that the Bishop found a wife for you," I remarked. "I suppose, therefore, that he was a great friend of yours."

"Not at all. The Bishop does the same for all the seminarists who wish to be ordained; it is an important part of his pastoral duties."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, in astonishment. "Surely that is carrying the system of paternal government a little too far. Why should his Reverence meddle with things that don't concern him?"

"But these matters do concern him. He is the natural protector of widows and orphans, especially among the clergy of his own diocese. When a parish priest dies, what is to become of his wife and daughters?"

Not perceiving clearly the exact bearing of these last remarks, I ventured to suggest that priests ought to economise in view of future contingencies.

"It is easy to speak," replied Bátushka: "A story is soon told," as the old proverb has it, 'but a thing is not soon done.' How are we to economise? Even without saving we have the greatest difficulty to make both ends meet."

"Then the widow and daughters might work and gain a livelihood."

"What, pray, could they work at?" asked Bátushka, and paused for a reply. Seeing that I had none to offer him, he continued, "Even the house and land do not belong to them, but to the new priest."

"If that position occurred in a novel," I said, "I could foretell what would happen. The author would make the new priest fall in love with and marry one of the daughters, and then the whole family, including the mother-in-law, would live happily ever afterwards."

"That is exactly how the Bishop arranges the matter. What the novelist does with the lifeless puppets of his imagination, the Bishop does with real beings of flesh and blood. As a rational being, however, he cannot leave things to chance. Besides this, he must arrange the matter before the young man takes orders, because, by the rules of the Church, the marriage cannot take place after the ceremony of ordination. When the affair is arranged before the charge becomes vacant, the old priest can die with the pleasant consciousness that his family is provided for."

"Well, Bátushka, you certainly put the matter in a very plausible way, but there seem to be two flaws in the analogy. The novelist can make two people fall in love with each other, and make them live happily together with the mother-in-law; but that—with all due respect to his Reverence be it said—is beyond the power of a Bishop."

"I don't know," said Bátushka, avoiding the point of the objection, "that love marriages are always the happiest ones; and as to the mother-in-law, there are—or at least there were until the emancipation of the serfs—a mother-in-law and several daughters-in-law in almost every peasant household."

"And does harmony generally reign in peasant households?"

"That depends upon the head of the house. If he is a man of the right sort, he can keep the women-folks in order." This remark was made in an energetic tone, with the evident intention of assuring me that the speaker was himself "a man of the right sort;" but I did not attribute much importance to it, for I have often observed that henpecked husbands habitually talk in this way when their wives are out of hearing."

The attitude of the Russian peasants towards religion is summarised as follows:

"It must be admitted that the Russian people are in a certain sense religious. They go regularly to church on Sundays and holy-days, cross themselves repeatedly when they pass a church or icon, take the Holy Communion at stated seasons, rigorously abstain from animal food—not only on Wednesdays and Fridays, but also during Lent and the other long fasts—make occasional pilgrimages to holy shrines, and, in a word, fulfil punctiliously all the ceremonial observances which they suppose necessary for salvation. But here their religiousness ends. They are generally profoundly ignorant of religious doctrine, and know little or nothing of Holy Writ. A peasant, it is said, was once asked by a priest if he could name the three Persons of the Trinity, and replied, without a moment's hesitation, "How can one not know that, Bátushka? Of course it is the Saviour,

the Mother of God, and St. Nicholas, the miracle-worker!" That answer represents fairly enough the theological attainments of a very large section of the peasantry. The anecdote is so well known and so often repeated that it is probably an invention, but it is not a calumny. Of theology, and of what Protestants term "the inner religious life," the Russian peasant has no conception. For him the ceremonial part of religion suffices; and he has the most unbounded childlike confidence in the saving efficacy of the rites which he practises. If he has been baptised in infancy, has regularly observed the fasts, has annually partaken of the Holy Communion, and has just confessed and received extreme unction, he feels death approach with the most perfect tranquillity. He is tormented with no doubts as to the efficacy of faith or works, and has no fears that his past life may possibly have rendered him unfit for eternal felicity. Like a man in a sinking ship who has buckled on his life-preserver, he feels perfectly secure. With no fear for the future and little regret for the present or the past, he awaits calmly the dread summons, and dies with a resignation which a Stoic philosopher might envy.

Mr. Wallace was taken ill whilst at Ivánofka of a disease of which he could not recognise the symptoms; and called in the assistance of a 'feldsher,' a kind of irregular medical practitioner, in this case 'an old soldier, who dresses wounds and gives physic.' This man was fortunate in his somewhat haphazard treatment of his sick neighbours. 'Everything I give them,' he told Mr. Wallace, 'though sometimes I don't clearly understand what the matter is, seems to do them good. I believe that faith does as much as physic.'

The life of the Russian peasantry is hard and realistic; and it is seen in detail in the course of Mr. Wallace's pages. The peasant family of the old type is a kind of primitive association, in which the members have nearly all things in common under the presidency of a Khozain, head of the household, or administrator. The Mir, or Village Community, the most peculiar of Russian institutions, may be roughly described as a primitive association on a larger scale.

'Between these two social units there are many points of analogy. In both there are common interests and common responsibilities. In both there is a principal personage, who is, in a certain sense, ruler within, and representative as regards the outside world: in the one case called Khozain, or Head of the Household, and in the other Starosta, or Village Elder. In both the authority of the ruler is limited: in the one case by the adult members of the family, and in the other by the Hóds of Households. In both there is a certain amount of common property; in the one case, the house and nearly all that it contains, and in the other, the arable land and pasturage. In both cases there is a certain amount of common responsibility: in the one case for all the debts, and in the other for all the taxes and communal obligations. And both are protected, to a certain extent, against the ordinary legal consequences of insolvency, for the family cannot be deprived of its house or necessary agricultural implements, and the Commune cannot be deprived of its land, by importunate creditors.

On the other hand, there are many important points of contrast. The Commune is, of course, much larger than the family, and the mutual relations of its members are by no means so closely interwoven. The members of a family all farm together, and those of them who earn money from other sources are expected to put their savings into the common purse; whilst the households composing a Commune farm independently, and pay into the common treasury only a certain fixed sum.

From these brief remarks the reader will at once perceive that a Russian village is something very different from a village in our sense of the term; and that the villagers are bound together by ties quite unknown to the English rural population. A family living in an English village has little reason to take an interest in the affairs of its neighbours. The isolation of the individual families may not be quite perfect, for man, being a social animal, takes, and ought to take, a certain interest in the affairs of those around him; and this social duty is sometimes fulfilled by the weaker sex with more zeal than is absolutely indispensable for the public welfare; but families may live for many years in the same village without ever becoming conscious of common interests. So long as the Jones family do not commit any culpable breach of public order, such as putting obstructions on the highway, or habitually setting their house on fire, their neighbour Brown takes probably no interest in their affairs, and has no ground for interfering with their perfect liberty of action. Jones may be a drunkard and hopelessly insolvent, and he may some night decamp clandestinely with his whole family and never more be heard of; but all these things do not affect the interests of

Brown, unless he has been imprudent enough to entertain with the delinquent more than simple neighbourly relations. Now, amongst the families composing a Russian village, such a state of isolation is impossible. The Heads of Households must often meet together and consult in the Village Assembly, and their daily occupations must be influenced by the communal decrees. They cannot begin to mow the hay or plough the fallow field until the Village Assembly has passed a resolution on the subject. If a peasant becomes a drunkard, or takes some equally efficient means to become insolvent, every family in the village has a right to complain, not merely in the interests of public morality, but from selfish motives, because all the families are collectively responsible for his taxes. For the same reason no peasant can permanently leave the village without the consent of the Commune; and this consent will not be granted until the applicant gives satisfactory security for the fulfilment of all his actual and future liabilities. If a peasant wishes to go away for a short time, in order to work elsewhere, he must obtain a written permission, which serves him as a passport during his absence; and he may be recalled at any moment by a communal decree. In reality he is rarely recalled, so long as he sends home regularly the full amount of his taxes—including the dues which he has to pay for the temporary passport—but sometimes the Commune uses the power of recall for the purpose of extorting money from the absent member. If it becomes known, for instance, that an absent member receives a good salary in one of the towns, he may one day receive a formal order to return at once to his native village; and be informed at the same time, unofficially, that his presence will be dispensed with if he will send to the Commune a certain amount of money. The money thus sent is generally used by the Commune for convivial purposes. Whether this method of extortion is frequently used by the Communes I cannot confidently say; but I suspect that it is by no means rare, for one or two cases have accidentally come under my own observation; and I know that the police of St. Petersburg have been recently ordered not to send back any peasants to their native villages, until some proof is given that the ground of recall is not a mere pretext.

In order to understand the Russian village system, the reader must bear in mind these two important facts: the arable land and the pasturage belong not to the individual houses, but to the Commune; and all the households are collectively and individually responsible for the entire sum which the Commune has to pay annually into the Imperial Treasury.

It is to their communal institutions that the Russians hope-

fully look to stave off from their country the bane and the blight of a 'hungry proletariat;' to escape the gigantic flood of pauperism which they believe to be threatening to overwhelm England. Whether the Mir will be attended with all the beneficial results expected from it may be reasonably questioned; and Mr. Wallace, whilst impartially setting forth 'how the Commune has been preserved,' and speculating as to 'what it is to effect in the future,' prudently forbears to prophesy, and leaves the question of its action and existence to the slow but inevitable solution of time.

'Though it may be confidently asserted that the Commune will sooner or later undergo profound modifications, it is not easy to predict what form it will ultimately assume. Perhaps all its peculiarities will disappear, and it will become merely an organ of local self-government. But, on the other hand, perhaps it will modify itself in accordance with new requirements, without abolishing its present fundamental characteristics, and succeed in partly realising the sanguine expectations of its admirers. The facility with which it has hitherto adapted itself to circumstances, and the vigorous vitality which it everywhere displays, tend to justify these expectations; but it is still too soon to speak with confidence. Time alone can solve the problem.'

Country life in Russia is pleasant enough in summer or in winter; but between summer and winter there is an intermediate period of several weeks, when the rain and mud transform a country house into something very like a prison. To escape this duration, Mr. Wallace left Ivánofka in September 1870, in order to spend the next few months at the town of Novgorod, which is not to be confounded with Nizhni-Novgorod, where the great annual fair is held. The urban element in the population of Russia, as compared with that of Western Europe, is relatively small; and whereas more than one-half of the people of Great Britain are dwellers in

town, the urban element in Russia is represented by no more than a tenth of the inhabitants. Assuming, with Mr. Wallace, that no town is worthy of the name unless it contains at least 10,000 inhabitants, it is found that in the whole of European Russia—excluding Finland, the Baltic provinces, Lithuania, Poland, and the Caucasus, which are politically, but not socially, parts of Russia—there are only 127 towns, of which only 25 contain more than 25,000, and only 11 contain more than 50,000 inhabitants.

The typical description of Russian towns is not flattering:

‘Those who wish to enjoy the illusions produced by scene-painting and stage-decorations should never go behind the scenes. In like manner he who wishes to preserve the delusion that Russian towns are picturesque should never enter them, but content himself with viewing them from a distance. A walk through the streets inevitably dispels the illusion, and proves satisfactorily that irregularity, even when combined with squalor, is not necessarily picturesque.’

However imposing Russian towns may look when seen from the outside, they will generally be found on closer inspection to be little more than villages in disguise. If they have not a positively rustic, they have at least a suburban, appearance. The streets are straight and wide, and are either miserably paved or not paved at all. *Trottoirs* are not considered indispensable. The houses are built of wood or stone, generally one-storied, and separated from each other by spacious yards. Many of them do not condescend to turn their façades to the street. The general impression produced is that the majority of the burghers have come from the country, and have brought their country-houses with them. There are few or no shops with merchandise tastefully arranged in the window to tempt the passer-by. If you wish to make purchases you must go to the Gostinny Dvor, or Bazaar, which consists of long symmetrical rows of low-roofed dimly-lighted stores, with a colonnade in front. This is the place where merchants most do congregate; but it presents nothing of that bustle and activity which we are accustomed to associate with commercial life. The shopkeepers stand at their doors or loiter about in the immediate vicinity waiting for customers. From the scarcity of these latter I should say that when sales are effected the profits must be enormous. In the other parts

of the town the air of solitude and languor is still more conspicuous. In the great square, or by the side of the promenade—if the town is fortunate enough to have one—cows or horses may be seen grazing tranquilly, without being at all conscious of the incongruity of their position. And, indeed, it would be strange if they had any such consciousness, for it does not exist in the minds either of the police or of the inhabitants. At night the streets are not lighted at all, or are supplied merely with a few oil-lamps, which do little more than render the darkness visible, so that cautious citizens returning home late often arm themselves with lanterns. A few years ago an honourable town-councillor of Moscow opposed a project for lighting the city with gas, and maintained that those who chose to go out at night should carry their lamps with them. The objection was overruled, and Moscow was supplied with gas-lamps; but very few of the provincial towns have as yet followed the example of the ancient capital.

Whilst willing to give credit to the mercantile classes for such virtues as they possess, Mr. Wallace cannot pretend to argue against their notorious ignorance and dishonesty; for the existence of which he has, however, some suggestive remarks in the way of explanation and apology. It is to be remembered that it would not be right to judge the commercial morality of Russia by an English standard; for trade in that country is only emerging from the primitive condition in which fixed prices and moderate profits are entirely unknown. Again, the trickery practised is clumsy in device, and easy of detection; and it seems in consequence to be the more heinous. The use of short weights and unfair measures is a coarser form of dishonesty than our own prevalent and more subtle systems of adulteration. The dishonesty and rascality which exist among the merchants are fully recognised by the Russians themselves. There is a rude popular play in which the devil, as principal *dramatis persona*, succeeds in cheating all manner and conditions of men, but is finally over-reached by a genuine Russian

merchant. When this play is acted at the Carnival Theatre at St. Petersburg, the audience invariably agree with the moral of the plot.

'If this play were acted in the southern towns near the coast of the Black Sea, it would be necessary to modify it considerably; for here, in company with Jews, Greeks, and Armenians, the Russian merchants seem honest by comparison. As to Greeks and Armenians, I know not which of the two nationalities deserves the palm; but it seems that both are surpassed by the Children of Israel. "How these Jews do business," I have heard a Russian merchant of this region exclaim, "I cannot understand. They buy up wheat in the villages at eleven roubles per Tchetrvert, transport it to the coast at their own expense, and sell it to the exporters at ten roubles! And yet they contrive to make a profit! It is said that the Russian trader is cunning, but here our 'brother' (i.e. the Russian) can do nothing." The truth of this statement I have had abundant opportunities of confirming.

The Russian merchant's love of ostentation is of a peculiar kind—something entirely different from English snobbery and American shoddiness. He may delight in gaudy reception-rooms, magnificent dinners, fast trotters, costly furs; or he may display his riches by princely donations to churches, monasteries, or benevolent institutions; but in all this he never affects to be other than he really is. He habitually wears a costume which designates plainly his social position, makes no attempt to adopt fine manners or elegant tastes, and never seeks to gain admission to what is called in Russia *la société*. Having no desire to seem what he is not, he has a plain unaffected manner, and sometimes a certain quiet dignity, which contrasts favourably with the affected manner of those nobles of the lower ranks who make pretensions to being highly educated, and strive to adopt the outward forms of French culture. At his great dinners, it is true, the merchant likes to see among his guests as many "generals"—that is to say, official personages—as possible, and especially those who happen to have a *grand cordon*; but he never dreams of thereby establishing an intimacy with these personages, or of being invited by them in return. It is perfectly understood by both parties that nothing of the kind is meant. The invitation is given and accepted from quite different motives. The merchant has the satisfaction of seeing at his table men of high official rank, and feels that the consideration which he enjoys among people of his own class is thereby augmented. If he succeeds in obtaining the presence of three generals, he obtains a victory over a rival who

cannot obtain more than two. The general, on his side, gets a first-rate dinner, and acquires, in return for the honour he has conferred, a certain undefined right to request subscriptions for public objects or benevolent institutions.'

Of all foreign countries known to Mr. Wallace, he awards the palm to Russia in all that regards hospitality. Every spring he found himself in possession of a large number of invitations from landed proprietors in different parts of the country—far more than he could possibly accept—and a great part of the summer was generally spent in wandering about from one country house to another. The Russian landed proprietors offer various types, amongst which are to be found men of nearly all ranks and conditions, from the rich magnate surrounded with all the refined luxury of West-European civilisation, to the poor, ill-clad, ignorant owner of a few acres which barely supply him with the necessaries of life. The hospitality of some of the jovial-minded proprietors of the middle rank is occasionally pushed to extremes. Travellers and guests may be in the greatest hurry, but all their excuses, protestations, and remonstrances will be in vain. A wheel will be taken off their tarantass, or some indispensable part of the harness will be secreted, and they may consider themselves fortunate if they succeed in getting away the next morning. Mr. Wallace says:

'This custom has fortunately become now very rare; it is still, however, occasionally practised in outlying districts. An incident of the kind happened to a friend of mine in 1871. He was detained against his will for two whole days by a man whom he had never seen before; and at last effected his escape by bribing the servants of his tyrannical host.'

Mr. Wallace furnishes lively sketches of the proprietors of both the ancient and the modern school; together with the difficulties encountered by the latter in intro-

ducing reforms in the processes and the implements of agriculture amongst their peasantry, their winter sojourns in the 'civilised society' of St. Petersburg, their political aspirations, and their literary tastes, criticisms, and preferences.

From the landed proprietors, Mr. Wallace proceeds to a discussion of 'the noblesse,' their past, present, and probable future. Thus he traces them from the times of Rurik, through the Tartar domination, the Tsardom of Muscovy, the reforms of Peter the Great, the adoption of West-European conceptions, the abolition of obligatory service, and the influence of Catherine II. in assimilating the court circle of St. Petersburg—and gradually the lower ranks of the Dvoryanstvo—to a 'superficial imitation, superficial only, of the French noblesse. Still less did they resemble the English aristocracy. There was no real independence under the new airs of dignity and hauteur. At present the noblesse, as a whole, cannot be called an aristocracy; a term which, if used at all, should be limited to a group of families that cluster around the courts and form the highest ranks of the noblesse. This social aristocracy contains many old families, but its real basis is official rank and general culture rather than pedigree or blood. To a considerable extent it takes the English aristocracy as its model, and harbours the secret hope of one day obtaining a social and political position similar to that of the nobility and gentry of England.

'Though it has no peculiar legal privileges, its actual position in the administration and at court gives its members great facilities for advancement in the public service. On the other hand, its semi-bureaucratic character, together with the law and custom of dividing landed property among the children at the death of their parents, deprives it of stability.

New men force their way into it by official distinction, whilst many of the old families are compelled by poverty to retire from its ranks. The son of a small proprietor or even of a parish priest may rise to the highest offices of State, whilst the descendants of the half-mythical Rurik may descend to the rank of peasants. It is said that not long ago a certain Prince Krapotkin gained his living as a cabman in St. Petersburg.

It is evident, then, that this social aristocracy must not be confounded with the titled families. Titles do not possess the same value in Russia as in Western Europe. They are very common, because the titled families are numerous, and all the children bear the titles of the parents, even while the parents are still alive; and they are by no means always associated with official rank, wealth, social position, or distinction of any kind. There are hundreds of princes and princesses who have not the right to appear at court, and who would not be admitted into what is called in St. Petersburg *la société*, or indeed into refined society in any country.

The only genuine Russian title is *Knяз*, commonly translated "Prince." It is borne by the descendants of Rurik, of the Lithuanian Prince Ghedimin, and of the Tartar Khans and Murzi officially recognised by the Tsars. Besides these, there are fourteen families who have adopted it by imperial command during the last two centuries. The titles of count and baron are modern importations, beginning with the time of Peter the Great. From Peter and his successors sixty-seven families have received the title of count, and ten that of baron. The latter are all, with two exceptions, of foreign extraction, and are mostly descended from court bankers.

There is a very common idea that Russian nobles are, as a rule, enormously rich. This is a mistake. The majority of them are poor.'

In Russia there is to-day very little caste spirit or caste prejudice. The nobles and the recently emancipated peasantry work amicably together in the *Zemstvo*, a kind of local administration, which supplements the action of the rural commune, and takes cognisance of those higher public wants which individual communes cannot possibly supply; and many similar curious facts are to be met with in the history of the emancipation, to a consideration of which, and of its consequences, Mr. Wallace devotes two thoughtful chapters.

The principal interest of Mr. Wallace's chapter, entitled 'Among the Heretics,' attaches to his intercourse with the Molokani, a body of sectarians in the Government of Samara, closely resembling the Scotch Presbyterians; whilst the 'Dissenters,' as, for example, the Old Ritualists, and the Priestless People, are subsequently described. Of the ethnological and theological varieties of Southern Russia, Mr. Wallace, in treating of the 'Foreign Colonists on the Steppe,' observes:

'The official statistics of New Russia alone—that is to say, the provinces of Ekaterinobol, Tauride, Kherson, and Bessarabia—enumerate the following nationalities: Great Russians, Little Russians, Poles, Servians, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, Moldavians, Germans, English, Swedes, Swiss, French, Italians, Greeks, Armenians, Tartars, Mordwa, Jews, and Gypsies. The religions are almost equally numerous. The statistics speak of Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Gregorians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Menonites, Separatists, Pietists, Karaim, Jews, Talmudists, Mahometans, and numerous Russian sects, such as the Molokani and the Skoptsi or Eunuchs. America herself could scarcely show a more motley list in her statistics of population.

It is but fair to state that the above list, though literally correct, does not give a true idea of the actual population. The great body of the inhabitants are Russian and Orthodox, whilst several of the nationalities named are represented by a small number of souls—some of them, such as the French, being found exclusively in the towns. Still, the variety even in the rural population is very great. Once, in the space of three days and using only the most primitive means of conveyance, I visited colonies of Greeks, Germans, Servians, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, and Jews. . . .

As an instance of the ethnological curiosities which the traveller may stumble upon unawares in this curious region, I may mention a strange acquaintance I made when travelling on the great plain which stretches from the Sea of Azof to the Caspian. One day I accidentally noticed on my travelling map the name "Shotlandakaya Koloniya" (Scottish Colony) near the celebrated baths of Piatigorsk. I was at that moment in Stavropol, a town about eighty miles to the north, and could not gain any satisfactory information as to what this colony was. Some well-informed people assured me that it really was what its name implied, whilst others asserted as confidently that it was simply a small German settlement.

To decide the matter I determined to visit the place myself, though it did not lie in my intended route, and I accordingly found myself one morning in the village in question. The first inhabitants whom I encountered were unmistakably German, and they professed to know nothing about the existence of Scotchmen in the locality either at the present or in former times. This was disappointing, and I was about to turn away and drive off, when a young man, who proved to be the schoolmaster, came up, and on hearing what I desired, advised me to consult an old Circassian who lived at the end of the village and was well acquainted with local antiquities. On proceeding to the house indicated, I found a venerable old man, with fine regular features of the Circassian type, coal-black sparkling eyes, and a long gray beard that would have done honour to a patriarch. To him I explained briefly, in Russian, the object of my visit, and asked whether he knew of any Scotchmen in the district.

"And why do you wish to know?" he replied, in the same language, fixing me with his keen sparkling eyes.

"Because I am myself a Scotchman, and hoped to find fellow-countrymen here."

Let the reader imagine my astonishment when, in reply to this, he answered, in genuine broad Scotch, "Od, man, I'm a Scotchman tae! My name is John Abercrombie. Did ye never hear tell o' John Abercrombie, the famous Edinburgh doctor?"

I was fairly puzzled by this extraordinary declaration. Dr. Abercrombie's name was familiar to me as that of a medical practitioner and writer on psychology, but I knew that he was long since dead. When I had recovered a little from my surprise, I ventured to remark to the enigmatical personage before me that, though his tongue was certainly Scotch, his face was as certainly Circassian.

"Weel, weel," he replied, evidently enjoying my look of mystification, "you're no' far wrang. I'm a Circassian Scotchman!"

This extraordinary admission did not diminish my perplexity, so I begged my new acquaintance to be a little more explicit, and he at once complied with my request. His long story may be told in a few words:

In the first years of the present century a band of Scotch missionaries came to Russia for the purpose of converting the Circassian tribes, and received from the Emperor Alexander I. a large grant of land in this place, which was then on the frontier of the Empire. Here they founded a mission, and began the work; but they soon discovered that the surrounding population were not idolaters, but Mussulmans, and consequently impervious to Christianity. In this difficulty they fell on the happy idea of buying Circassian children from their parents, and bringing them up as Christians. One of these

children, purchased about the year 1806, was a little boy called Teona. As he had been purchased with money subscribed by Dr. Abercrombie, he had received in baptism that gentleman's name, and he considered himself the foster-son of his benefactor. Here was the explanation of the mystery.'

In Russia, religion and nationality are, practically speaking, so closely allied as to be almost identical. Yet of the 61,000,000 composing the population of European Russia—excluding Finland, Poland, and the Caucasus—above 9,000,000 are non-Orthodox. Of these, nearly 3,000,000 are Roman Catholics, rather more than 2,000,000 are Protestants, about 1,500,000 are Jews, 2,000,000 are Mahometans, and 86,000 are Lamäists.

In the course of our remarks and quotations we have nearly traversed the pages devoted by Mr. Wallace to subjects which seem specially adapted to our purpose. Social phenomena tend, as our author proceeds in his second volume, to become merged in political statement and speculation—as when he treats of St. Petersburg and European influence, with a passing expression of doubt as to any considerable danger from the 'secret societies;' of Moscow and the Slavophiles; of Church and State; of the Crimean War, and its consequences; of the Serfs, their emancipation and its results; and lastly, winds up with a statement of the 'Eastern Question.' Any words from the pen of a man of Mr. Wallace's judgment and experience must be of value and interest, and almost of freshness, even on so well-worn a subject as

this; and we take our leave of so great a literary achievement with a regret that our space should have allowed us to do so little in the way of its illustration. Our conclusion will aptly take the form of a quotation, in the first few lines of which the writer shrewdly estimates the relation of Russia to the recent outbreak of Pan Slavism in the northern provinces of European Turkey:

'Had the Tsar allowed Serbia to be devastated with fire and sword, the name of Russian would have become a byword and a reproach among all sections of the Slavonic race. But he still desired, if possible, to avoid war, and accordingly showed himself ready to make all manner of concessions. Thus, all through the negotiations, Russia has played the part of a man who wishes to keep a fire lighted, and yet does not wish to expend fuel. Again and again, whilst observing closely her policy towards the Servians and Montenegrins, I have been reminded of the anecdote about the French revolutionary leader, who, before advancing to a barricade, pointed to the crowd and whispered confidentially to a friend: "Il faut bien les suivre; je suis leur chef!"

Whatever the result of the present negotiations may be, the arrangement will be merely temporary. We ought always to remember that, as Mr. Grant Duff graphically puts it, "the Christian races inhabiting the Eastern Peninsula must eventually grow over the head alike of the Turk and of the Mussulman Slavonian." And beyond the Slavonic Question lies the Eastern Question in the wider sense of the term. The destinies of Asia are to a great extent in the hands of Russia and England. Though the field is wide enough for both, and the history of the Conference gives good omens for the future, it would be childishly sanguine to assume that we shall never disagree. Let us always beware, however, of mistaking imaginary for real interests, and of fighting about a misunderstanding. Meanwhile, our duty is clear. We ought to know Russia better, and thereby avoid unnecessary collisions. It is in the hope of contributing in some small measure to this desirable object that the present work has been written.'

EXAMINATION HORRORS.

MANY and many a time have the horrors of an examination been described; it is a subject on which any man can talk or write readily after he has once gone through its gloomy terrors, and on which every writer fears not to be tedious, since it has such a weird interest to himself. A man who has once been examined, who has passed the Styx of paper-work and the Phlegethon of *vivâ voce*, comes out with a delicious sense of relief—more especially if he has been (in slang phrase) ‘hotted’ by the Rhadamanthus in M.A. gown and hood. His sensations are what one might imagine to be those of some Alpine climber who, after standing, anxious and trembling, on the brink of some yawning chasm, has at last succeeded in jumping it. At Oxford, to which place alone the following remarks have reference, though presumably it is much the same at other universities, every one has some hideous anecdote to tell about his ‘viva,’ and ‘the mass of floating knowledge’ on this subject is something astonishing. If ever one is short of conversation, the most obvious and natural remark is about the Schools (i.e. the examinations). ‘Are you in the Schools this term?’ If the answer be, ‘No,’ there comes the inevitable, ‘Lucky man! I wish I were not. By the way, did you hear how Jones of Jesus translated *gelidus canis cum montibus humor liquitur*?’* If the an-

swer again be ‘No,’ he proceeds to give the extraordinary rendering, “‘When the cold dog is left on the mountains”—what a joke (*humor*)!’ Another very common remark is the mild witticism about Hannibal crossing the Alps *summa diligentia*,—on the top of a diligence. There are thousands of wonderful answers of this sort which have been given in the Schools, and which people with long memories treasure up in their minds, whence, as occasion offers, they bring out things new and old—chiefly old. Every one knows of the member of W— College who translated *latum clavum induerat in domo mea*,*—‘he had caused a wide gap in my family circle;’ and of the man who translated *ισώζοντο μὲν πολεμοῦντες, ἀπώλοντο δὲ ἀρχόντες*,†—‘they preserved the warriors, but put to death the magistrates.’

The Divinity School is the most noted for the production of ghastly errors (popularly called ‘howlers’), and perhaps the reason of this is that every one can understand what is wrong in this examination because it has the advantage of being almost entirely in English. In the case of Latin and Greek errors, many of the hearers are quite as ignor-

of translating for the benefit of those who do not know Latin.

* Properly, ‘He had put on the lat-clave (the badge of a senator) in my house.’

† A remark of Aristotle about the Spartans: ‘As long as they were at war they were kept safe; but came to ruin when they had gained empire and were a sovereign state.’

* Virgil, *Georg.* The right translation is, ‘When the snow and ice are melted on the frosty mountains.’ I take the liberty

ant as those who make the mistakes. For instance, to a man who does not know the meaning of *sic volvere Parcas*,* it does not seem any particular joke to hear these words translated, 'so to roll the Parks'; or to hear *mala ducis ari domum†* rendered 'you are carrying home the apples of your grandfather.' But in the case of Divinity 'howlers,'—such, for instance, as that where a man, in giving the parable of the Good Samaritan, ended his narrative with the words, 'On the morrow he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, saying, What-soever he costeth more, when I come again I will repay thee. This he said, knowing he should see his face no more,'—in a case like this the absurdity strikes every one instantly.

Again, it is somewhat laughable when a man translates *σκοληκοβρωτός ἐγένετο* (which means 'he was eaten of worms'—applied to Herod in the Acts) by 'he was made a scolecobrote,' which latter word he proceeds to explain as 'an honourable office in the Roman army.'

It is most natural for men to laugh at troubles after they are past—the greatest mishaps it afterwards pleases us to call to mind; the amusement it causes to think over these mistakes is a very fair indication of pain felt when they were made. The feeling of utter blankness, of total vacuity, which comes over the mind when the examiner in a bland tone of voice requests you to 'take your Ethics (or as a certain Oxford don prefers to call it, "your Hethics") and discuss the economic ideas of Aristotle,' or 'to take your Republic and show the connection between a square

number and the tyrannical man!' And when, in the most lamentable excitement and in that kind of 'funk' which is said to be blue, you mutter some feeble answer, the examiner, with a smile, remarks, 'I do not think that is quite right. Is it?' Then does the heart go pitapat; then does chill horror seize one's marrow; then might one's hair on the instant turn gray from very terror. And then that aposiopesis—which a man once explained to be the case of a person asked a question to which he did not know the answer! *Ah, c'est affreux!* In a parenthesis, it may be remarked they always smile, and this smile seems to the man being 'viva'd' something diabolical, compared with which the inhumanity of Nero fiddling while Rome was in flames seems perfect mildness. That they should smile at the tortures of their victim is too much; one can imagine the vulture in the Æschylean myth giving a smile like this when it came day by day to tear out the vitals of Prometheus.

Perhaps, in order to be understood by those who are not acquainted with the system of examinations at Oxford, it may be as well to explain that in order to get a degree there are five or six examinations to be passed during a time which varies from three years (the shortest) to four years and a half (the longest). The first examination the gods call Responses, but men call 'Smalls'; the second is called the first public examination, but this again is commonly designated 'Mods,' lastly come three or four final examinations, which go by the name of 'Greats.' In each of these examinations there is in the first place paper-work for so many days, in which one is provided with a paper of questions, a book of blank paper,

* 'That so the Fates ordain' (Virgil).

† 'You are bearing home (Helen) under evil auspices' (Horace).

two quill-pens, a small square table, a cane-bottomed chair, and an ink-pot. With the aid of these the candidate in the final classical school (to take an instance) is expected, or rather is presumed, to be able to write a decent essay on any branch of human knowledge, mathematics and physical science excepted. When the doors are opened, in troop the crowd of luckless wights: each seeks the table which he has secured for the week by the payment of an insignificant guinea, and anxiously scans the list of questions. And then, *quis sudor!* What an appalling view of one's ignorance! One man immediately fixes his eyes in a glassy stare at the ceiling, as if calling Heaven to his aid; another contemplates with great interest the gloss of his boots; a third tears the end of his gown; another scratches his head (which process is commonly supposed to assist thought amazingly); another buries his head in his hands; another puts his hands in his pockets and surveys the room in a lordly manner; another, probably the most empty-headed, promptly begins scribbling away at an alarming rate. The room is certain to be either at freezing or boiling point, for these examinations are held only at midwinter and midsummer. In winter every one repairs thither in overcoat with a rug on his arm, for fires are forbidden in the sacred precincts of the Schools, for fear of burning down the Bodleian Library. In summer the heat is something intense, for there is no ventilation in the aforesaid sacred precincts. On a recent occasion, of which the writer has a recollection more lively than pleasant, there were ninety men in one room, and the whole week the sun was pouring down rays of alarming heat. The atmosphere in this

room was, as a certain don remarked, 'simply mephitic.'

But even after undergoing the agonies of heat and closeness, there remains, after a few days' interval, *vivâ voce*. The last state here is indeed worse than the first. Attend, O Muse, and say what the *vivâ voce* is like. The description will not take very long. In a large room, at one side of a long table, sit four or five examiners; on the other side are four or five vacant chairs, one of which the man to be examined is invited to occupy. The man attends in white tie, which is the sacrificial vestment of the period—possibly a reminiscence of the meaning of the word candidate. At Rome men who were canvassing for any public office used to appear *candidati* in white togas: we have preserved the word candidate, but the whiteness is preserved only in the hue of the necktie and in the ghastly pallor of the wearer. When the examinee has taken his seat the examiner opposite trots him through the outlines of Aristotle's philosophy, or canters him over the delightful narratives of Herodotus or Thucydides, and generally leads him up and down the slopes of Parnassus, as well as spur, whip, or coaxing can prevail on the lagging steed. After one examiner has done with him he hands him over to another. Examiner the first smiles (they always do) and says, 'Thank you; Mr. T— will now take you.' The man transfers himself to the next chair opposite Mr. T—, who smiles and remarks, 'I want to ask you a few questions in logic.' Then ensues more cantering, more trotting, and more 'refusing,' in the horsey sense of the word. At last a final smile, a final 'Thank you'—the conversational powers of examiners are not great—releases the man from torture: he

yields his place to the next man, and hurries away 'execrating the abode of the Sibyl.'

Then if, later on, he is fortunate enough to find a *testamur* waiting for him, viz. a little piece of blue paper stating that he has satisfied the examiners, happy is he, and his end shall be glorious. But if not, the same ordeal is renewed the following term, and all the excitement has to be gone through again. An amusing case occurred lately of a man who had been 'ploughed' several times for Smalls. He went in for *viva voce*, did badly as usual; afterwards he came straight back to his rooms, remarked to one of his friends, 'I'm ploughed again,' and, without even taking off his white tie, sat down and began reading his Greek play for the examination next term. 'But to those that overcome there is a life more blessed

than that of the Olympic victors,' when they have received their *testamurs* and have handed over the regulation shilling to the clerk of the Schools. Then does the bountiful man bring out his best cigars; then does he pour forth with lavish hand the fiery port and the poisonous champagne, such as one generally gets at Oxford; which, soon taking effect, make the humorous man bold and the quiet man noisy. Then do choruses, sung with more unanimity than sweetness, disturb the lucubrations of reading men and the downy slumbers of dons. Finally, the lucky man who has passed is discovered in the small hours of the morning sitting on the grass in the middle of the quadrangle, muttering in a vinous tone of voice for the information of passers-by, 'I've got my *testamur*.'

L. W. LLOYD.

THE EXORCISM.

Soft addresses, rare caresses,
 Passionate phrases, mute appeals;
 Love that blesses and confesses
 All that heart of heart reveals;
 Tresses straying, purple, playing,
 Radiant rippling in the breeze;
 Eyes all saying, lips all praying,—
 Bliss should be the meed of these.

Weak, defiant, strongly pliant,
 Prim exotic, violet wild;
 Now as giant self-reliant,
 Now a wilful-yielding child.
 Yet she never fain would sever
 What she is from what she seems;
 This for ever her endeavour—
 To exorcise baleful dreams.



THE END



THE EXORCIST.

See the Verses,



Sweetly singing love all clinging,
In the lull of tenderest lays;
Then upspringing, grandly ringing
Forth the peals that heroes praise.
Concords blended, unattended,
Must she then despair at last?
Arts all ended, all expended,
Still he lingers with the past.

Visions teeming throng his dreaming,
Flit before his far-off eyes;
Visions gleaming bright and beaming
On the cloud of memories;
Hopes that, dying, pass'd in sighing,
Ghostlike whisper through the air;
Angels flying mock his crying,
Smite him to a chill despair.

Wife still yearning, constant turning
To a sun that will not shine,
Set thy burning heart to learning
From a simpler craft than thine.
Wife and mother, there are other
Wiles that may compel success;
And another 'chance may smother
Pangs that cleave to thy caress.

Thoughts that frighten thee will brighten
'Neath the spell of infant hands;
Hands that lighten care and tighten
Round his neck their fairy bands.
Childish science, pure reliance,
With this aid thy strife is won;
Such alliance scorns defiance—
Thou art heiress to thy son!

A. H. G.

PROUD MAISIE.

CHAPTER VII.

WHITHER ?

'In a herber grene aslepe as when I lay,
The byrdes sange swete in the middes of
the day ;

I dreamed fast of myrth and play.

In youth is pleasure, in youth is
pleasure.'

Old Song.

My mother, her twins, and several strata of luggage are well on their way to Boregate. I am starting with Eva for the small suburban villa at Westburn, where we mean to rusticate for a week or two; read novels, ramble, rhyme, and unreason to our hearts' content.

I left home in unwonted spirits. Excellent reasons, by the dozen, I found to account for that. Even idle people can enjoy a holiday, and sometimes better than the workers. I was tired of London, its occupations and amusements, of the slang of politics, fashion, and art, the atmosphere of practical pushing, wakeful life, high pressure, and the main chance. The change would be delicious. I was going to live through a few pages of an idyl, and pay court for a while to oaks, roses, and singing birds, instead of to the puppet-gods in Vanity Fair.

And in Eva's companionship. It is possible to exist, and exist happily, in this world without lovers, without kith and kin even, but not without friends. More than once, I believe, did Eva save my brain from exploding with the multitude of ideas, thoughts, fancies, and feelings there fermenting, but which—no, not with the alternative of spontaneous cerebral combustion before

my eyes could I have poured out to my mother and the twins, nor, perhaps, to any one of a nature less calm, less passively responsive than hers.

Indeed at times I have felt an active sympathy for quick-witted sensitive men who choose their wives from the placid, good-tured, and—shall we say?—obtuse sisterhood. Restlessness of brain implies also periodical reactions, unreasonable impotence, nay, lapses into folly and vacancy; occasions when the society of acute people becomes a painful reproach, but the face of an inexcitable, unobservant, uncritical helpmeet appears, as it were, the face of an angel. Such a one bears her lord's nervous ebullitions with soothing patience, because suffering less from them, or nothing.

But how far higher than the forbearing but apathetic wife stands the perfect responsive friend! Eva's tranquil temperament had a literal fascination for impatient beings. They were always seeking in her the repose they needed. Less variable than I, she was still always sympathetic, whatever my mood, myself in monochrome.

The first morning, Eva went over to the Priory to begin work in the aviary. Mr. Severn had gone early to the City, that place blessed of women for taking (as nothing else can do) their fathers, husbands, brothers, off their hands for the best part of the day.

I let the hours slip by under the limes in the garden, where I sat solitary, reading to the smell

of the blossoms and the hum of the bees in the flower-bells.

Towards five o'clock I heard voices approaching down the lane, then the click of the garden-gate behind me. I was too idle, too well content perhaps, to look round.

'Good-evening,' said Jasper Gerard's voice; 'you look very happy there, Miss Noel.'

'So I feel,' said I, turning to meet him and Eva. 'I have been lotus-eating all day.'

'Why didn't we see you with Miss Severn at the Priory?'

'I am not an artist, you know.'

'I know you don't paint. But I want to hear how my libretto is getting on.'

'You ought to tell me that.'

'Our libretto, then,' said he, taking the garden-chair by my side. 'What, won't you help me with it, as you promised?'

Of course I had promised nothing, and I shook my head ominously.

'Now look here,' said he; 'division of labour is the order of the day. Suppose I arrange the scenes as they come, and you supply the words; that's fair, isn't it?'

'Is it begun already?'

'To be sure. Why, I have the whole of the first act in my head, all finished, *except the words*.'

I begged for further particulars, and he pulled out a very few pencil-notes, which we began to look over together, whilst Eva went round the garden with her watering-pot, refreshing the rose-trees.

'First, we must give it a name,' Mr. Gerard began gravely; 'I shall call it the *Portent*; Miss Noel permitting, that is.'

Miss Noel nodded approval, and he went on to explain.

'It opens with a chorus, of course—a chorus of vintagers.'

'Vintagers! why vintagers?' I asked.

'O, that's for local colour's

sake. I've laid the scene in North Italy, a vine-country. Next enters our hero, young Rafael, but disguised as a fisherman.'

'Why must he be in disguise?'

'O, as usual—to avoid attracting observation,' he said, laughing; 'but of course the disguise is as conspicuous as can be, and most becoming. However, for the present, he and Antonio have long cloaks.'

'Antonio! who is he, and where does he come from?'

'Don't you know an operative hero must always have a *chaperon* to go about with? If he lost him, he'd be as badly off as the man who lost his shadow. Sometimes it's an old monk; sometimes an old soldier, or an old servant; not unfrequently the devil—but some fellow he *must have*, to sing bass. I have made Rafael a knight, and his *vade mecum* an old squire. They question the vintagers about the castle on yonder island; and here's a first-rate opportunity for one of the chorus to sing a ballad, relating the story of Count Dario's daughter, the astrologer's portent, and the dreary captivity in which she lives. Then they disperse; and Rafael *recitatives* to Antonio his solemn intention to find his way to Perdita, whom he has already seen and loves. The old man gives good advice, which serves to show off Rafael's obstinacy. They have it out in a duet, then go off, and the scene changes.'

We challenged each other, and set to work; he on the chorus, and I on the vintager's ballad. Eva brought us tea on the lawn, puzzled by the reiterated peals of laughter which our own doggerel rhymes elicited from us, their composers. But we had vowed not to give in or think of going home to dinner until, between us, we had made a beginning, at all events. At last Mr. Gerard announced that

he had four lines certain, eight at a pinch, of the chorus ready. What could it signify? As if anybody ever listened to the chorus words in an opera—or could catch them if he did!

'Gather the grapes from the drooping vine,
Where the leaves and the clusters intertwine;
Under the trellis o'er-cover'd with creepers
Hang the rich clusters, ripe for the reapers;
Sparkles the sun on the rippling lake;
O'er meadow and hill the world is awake.
Toil till the sun sinks down in the west,
And the *Angelus* rings us at eve to rest.'

Honour was saved. We threw down our pencils, and chattered instead. We were as good as alone; and the lime-blossoms fell, shaken down over our heads in a fragrant shower. How little, how very little, will suffice to make up for any one of us a private paradise! A summer-day, a small garden in flower, and the chosen one at our side. Yet how it manages to elude us! '*Diis aliter visum*,' we sigh, with more or less pious resignation, but '*diabolis*' would more truly express our feelings.

The sound of a loud cheerful voice and loud boots going about the house announced Mr. Severn's return.

Jasper frowned, sighed, and got up to go.

'You must come over to-morrow afternoon,' said he, 'and visit the "Tropics," as we call our greenhouse and aviary. Miss Severn shall paint, and you and I will write some more verses. Good-bye till then.'

'Till then, till then!' I kept repeating to myself silently. I wondered how I could ever have thought life flat and unprofitable. It seemed to me now as though it might be glorious or it might be utterly miserable; but never, to me, a neutral thing again.

'What is the effect upon you

of perpetually passing through a cemetery?' asked Eva sententially, as in going to the Priory the following afternoon we threaded our way through the graves. 'Does it not set you musing on death till you are half in love with it, or perhaps make you cling closer to life?'

'O, neither,' said I, with a little shudder, but inclined to be flip-pant; 'only it disposes me to agitate for cremation, as so much more æsthetic than the other. Pray for me, Eva, that I may not die till funeral fashions have changed.'

Neither to be burnt nor buried, however, could I have cheerfully resigned myself that day. Somehow, the inevitable hour seemed farther off than usual, and the idea more unwelcome and inconceivable.

The churchyard led directly into the fields surrounding the Priory. Eva, without going to the front-door, brought me through the garden to the conservatory, where her work was in progress.

The 'Tropics' was a large hot-house, well stocked with brilliant exotics. Part of it, divided off, formed the aviaries, where a profusion of yellow and green canaries, paroquets, waxbills, and others sported among the gaudy scarlet lilies and coral flowers, hopped about on the mimic rock-work, and perched on the dwarf-palms and tree-ferns that spread around.

Mr. Gerard, who was there already, came to meet us, holding a large bouquet, which he put into my hands, saying,

'A thank-offering for your nectarines the other day.'

We were quits now. That was a bouquet extraordinary; not such a one as we are accustomed to give or to receive—an assortment of spiked flower-heads like nothing in the realm of Nature—but a nosegay such as Chloris might

have gathered for herself, or Eve in Eden, where I always imagined, in defiance of the rules of natural history, that all hot-house flowers grew wild.

Eva's easel was ready prepared for her. Neither was I to be idle. Jasper had put a chair and table for me, and set me to work instantly on the second scene.

'Where are we?' I asked, bewildered.

'We are inside the castle,' he replied; 'and Perdita is sitting alone in the evening light at an open window, thinking of Rafael, whom, having once seen, she cannot possibly forget; add to which, that she doesn't even try.'

That was a good rhyming day. Something in the shape of a song for Perdita ere long suggested itself:

'The flowers sleep;
Hush'd are the birds on every bough;
O'er the silent deep
The light waves ripple in whispers low,
Faints the breeze on the mountain's brow.

My heart must wake:
Echoes unheard that haunt the air
My slumbers break;
Breathing of fitful hope, or care,
Of love's delight—or chill despair.

Could we dream to meet!
Droop on thy stem, lily or rose;
Thy rest is sweet.
But sweeter far, when the shadows close,
Are the depths of the lover's unreprieve.'

'Now what have you done?' said I, turning to my neighbour.

He displayed his sheet of paper absolutely null and void.

'Disgraceful, isn't it?'

'Don't you like writing?'

'I prefer seeing you write. Never do anything yourself which you can get somebody else to do for you.'

'Ah, that's why! Now I understand.'

'Why—what?'

'Why clever men like you never do anything in the world.'

He laughed at the impertinence.

'After all, what is there worth doing?'

'Everything, if only one can do it well enough.'

'That's a lady's point of view.'

'Did you always take the other?'

'Yes; I think so. But I expect that you opine, with Heine, that never to originate anything—"*nichts schaffen*"—is the mark "*des Teufels*."

I observed considerably that I thought that was going a little too far, and he thanked me for my leniency, adding:

'Those who find themselves tolerably well off where they are may perhaps do a trifling service by standing aside and letting the discontented push on. It mayn't be a very noble view, but—'

'But I see how it might be,' I responded. 'Why, the very idea of repose would go out of the world if everybody must needs be always fighting and struggling for advancement.'

A little more, and I should see in him the apotheosis of Idleness. Yet not idleness, as commonly understood. No one I had ever met seemed, so to speak, to have come to a more thorough and satisfactory understanding with life. Might not his, after all, be a more complete and full, and in some ways a higher, walk than that of the restless million, to whom the good things of this world can give but half enjoyment and content unless they themselves can push to the front rank?

'Jasper, Jasper,' said a penetrative female voice at our elbow, 'here you are. I have been sending Jenkins all over the house to look for you.'

Turning round, I saw the lady I remembered as the Florentine Duchess. Her present costume was of the court of Mrs. Grundy; black, neat, irreproachable, and

there was a quarter of a century of widowhood in her aspect as she swept about the conservatory and shook hands with Eva and myself blandly, but with marked displeasure in her blandness.

What a head! Small, smooth, sandy-haired; obstinacy in the facial outline; light, cold, steady eyes, with a judiciously critical steely severity in their gaze—a look that would have frozen the blood of a male opponent in his veins. It had the very opposite effect on mine.

I said 'opponent.' She had the most inimical smile. Instinctively one felt for one's feminine weapons of self-defence.

'What on earth is the matter?' asked her son philosophically.

'Lord and Lady Meredith have been calling here. I thought you were not at home; and they waited an hour or more in hopes of seeing you at last.'

'Well, mother, I'm heartily sorry you should have had the trouble of entertaining them so long. But if you didn't find them heavy in hand, I am thankful that Jenkins never thought of looking for me in the greenhouse. Perhaps he knew I was there, and that a peevish valetudinarian like Meredith is what I most dislike; and that as for his wife—'

'Hush, hush, Jasper!' she warned reprovingly, but in vain.

'Why, I can never find a single word to say to her out of a ballroom. She waltzes perfectly well, but where's the use of that at three in the daytime? And I don't care to have it forced upon my notice that last night's hour is a born idiot.'

'You owe them common civility at least. So there is no occasion for you to force your opinion of them upon their notice in this manner.'

Once in the conservatory, there she evidently meant to stay. I

watched her closely and eagerly. In spite of her son's outward rebellion, it was easy to see how she might have much real influence over him. There is a practical talent for governing and managing, which some women acquire, and to which men like Jasper, with a certain fastidious laziness of nature that makes them impatient of those petty details of life which nevertheless form such an important part of it, are apt to submit to save themselves trouble, till they cannot shake off its ascendancy even when they would.

'*A demain*,' he said, as Eva and I took our leave presently; and I saw his mother's eyes fixed upon us with one of those 'take-in-everything-at-a-glance' expressions, that go through the victim like a spear.

'So much authority have I preserved over my son as leaves me a veto in his affairs,' was the intimation it seemed to convey.

She did not like me. It was no distinction, for I soon found that her favourites were few. To win her I should have had to pay her careful court, and I shrank from any approach to that. We were scrupulously polite to each other, but Mrs. Gerard had the art of civil rudeness to a perfection I have never seen equalled. She always spoke the most disagreeable things as it were with the soft pedal down, which added to the effect of their sarcasm.

I could not like her, and was not sorry when, about a week after, she left the Priory, and went down to Brighton to stay. Jasper was to join her later, but for the present he remained to superintend some alterations Mr. Severn was making for him at the Priory. Nearly every day we saw him; golden days were those for me. At times the present appeared to me too perfect to be

anything but a dream; at others it seemed as if the whole of my life hitherto had been artificial and conventional, and I now touched reality for the first time.

And this was the truer impression of the two. A young girl's life is of necessity so entirely subjective. Her opinions, ideas, principles, right or false, clear or hazy, are the outcome of thought and imagination, not experience. And up to now, though loving and cherishing the bright fancies of poets and novelists, I did not know but what they might be fancies merely, and had always been the first to laugh at the contrast between them and the actualities of life. Was I waking from the trance of sceptical indifference, to find romance right after all, and the poet laughing in his sleeve?

We lived it out, our idyl. It was brief, but fraught with the value of a lifetime in my estimation. And sympathising so wondrously as he and I were apt to do in other ways, could it be worthless to him?

I forgot that I was a child by his side; that the elixir, the mere taste of which intoxicated me, was only a drop in his glass of life; that it was one thing for him to have brought a kind of spring into my limited and barren field, but that to surmount, absorb, supplant, and usurp power over all that grew in his own wide and well-filled sphere, was another.

It was pleasant, I suppose, all this harmless intercourse with a young girl who, he perhaps felt, appreciated his excellence; pleasant to idle away the mornings in a sweet-smelling green-house, the evenings under the limes in Mr. Severn's garden. Besides, he was deeply interested in our opera libretto, and bent upon seeing it finished. It amused him to make

me write it all, he reserving to himself the office of critic. O, it was pleasant, of course; no more than this, though.

Cooler heads than mine were no acuter. Mr. Severn's hints and good-humoured banter were at times rather hard to bear, and as for Eva, her affection for me forbade her to see anything but the reflection of her own wishes in what was going on.

One afternoon in particular we had stayed later than usual at the Priory. Eva was at work in the Tropics, but Jasper, who was busying himself with Mr. Severn, had banished me to the garden, declaring that I did nothing but talk while within earshot of her. He established me with my task under the trellis-work, buried in jasmine, and came from time to time to see how I was getting on.

I had the page's song before me, but could not keep my thoughts fixed on that, or anything, and when Mr. Gerard joined me I had only the three lines to show—

'I come from where, in sorrow and un-
rest,
A maiden waits and sings, "O fair pale
face,
Ah! who hath borne thee far from my
embrace?"'

'It was better in Italian,' said I deprecatingly, 'but I cannot get on to-day. You must finish it, you must indeed.'

'To-morrow,' I think he said; I know we wrote no more that afternoon.

He walked home with us across the fields.

Mr. Severn persuaded him to stay and dine; and we all sat out afterwards under the limes in the cool starlight. I was 'fay' that night, and have ever since believed in that superstition.

At about eleven o'clock the door-bell rang loudly, disagreeably. Everybody looked aghast,

and a nervous unaccustomed dread took hold of me as I saw the servant come out to us bearing a yellow envelope.

A telegram sent over from the Priory for Mr. Gerard.

His brow contracted as he read it.

'From my mother at Brighton. She is not well.'

'Nothing serious, of course,' said Mr. Severn, in his usual sanguine way.

'O, no, I hope not. But she is quite alone.'

A damp chill had fallen over the party. He seemed anxious, preoccupied, and took leave of us almost directly.

Towards midnight Eva came suddenly into my room. The light was out, but, as she had divined, I was not sleeping.

'What is the matter, child?' for I was sitting up by the window, staring out vacantly.

'Nothing.' It was only that my unreasonable spirits had somehow as unreasonably forsaken me, and a nightmare of a passing misgiving crossed me that my present happiness was as ethereal as it was divine, a breath would blow it away.

'It will be all right, Maisie,' said Eva caressingly; 'he will not go; or if he does, he will find his way back very soon.'

He did go, however, the very next day, intending, he told Mr. Severn, to return almost immediately. But a week slipped by, then another; my visit must end ere long, and still the Priory was shut up. Mr. Gerard was not coming back. His mother was quite recovered, but they had a round of visits to pay, and would not now return to the Priory till October. The idyl was over.

He had not forgotten, though, and wrote to me again and again about the opera. That was a link. It might need but a meeting to rivet it. And with this thought in

my heart, and half a dozen of Mr. Gerard's letters—business letters of course—in my pocket, and with a child's sure and joyful hope of a beautiful end to crown a beautiful tale, I left Westburn to join my family at Boregate.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ADDRESS REJECTED.

WHO does not love the sea?

Myself for one. It is grand, it is infinitely expressive, but how cold and inflexible! I feel its fascination, but hate it; a fascination like that of the huge frozen Alps, and rousing in us pigmies a similar restless, helpless, uneasy sensation, an intellectual *malaise* I can never shake off whilst in the presence of the sea.

Calm, it is crushing. See it at low tide, a dead flat of waters and stagnant sands and slime, broken by shapeless masses of honey-combed rock and shrivelling seaweed. Rough, it is madding in its loud, ceaseless, fruitless contest and plaint; only too speaking an image of life, and the everlasting vain struggle and protest of the creature against the Creator.

Sometimes I fancy that under a different sky, where another sea with another face washes the shores of blue Capri or the promontories of Greece, I might learn to love it; but along the bleak, white, inhospitable-looking cliffs of *perfidious Albion* never, not for all the pure ozone of the German Ocean.

For years past we had been accustomed to migrate every autumn to Boregate, often remaining there for the best part of the winter. My mother liked, or believed she liked, the place, partly, I think, because it suited the twins, and partly because the Jarvises had a

family estate not far from the little town. It is a good thing to have friends at court, and they were lords paramount, in a small and social way, of Boregate, from Bellairs, their large and handsome residence, so well placed and conspicuous, and looking down so contemptuously on the desolate dwarfish country round.

Boregate itself had not the slightest charm for me. Other visitors were happy there; sketched, lounged, bathed, walked, rode, yachted, inhaled the sea breezes, nor asked for more. I moped. To me it had all the dreariness of a desert, without even the desert's charm, such as it is, of solitude.

But this year it seemed to have grown more tolerable than usual. As the familiar rows of little stuccoed houses, the single hotel, the lighthouse, crude chalk cliff, turnip-fields, small black pier, six bathing-machines, and muddy sands met my eyes once more, I began to understand how people could look at those objects without losing their spirits, and how even in the hands of an ingenious artist they might be cooked up into little pictures.

A day or two after my arrival, surprising to say, I actually volunteered to go for a long walk on the sands with Ethel and Claude, and, more surprising still, found myself enjoying it too. We wandered on, a mile or so, and then I sat down under the cliffs, reading over and revising the *Portent* to the accompaniment of the sea music, whilst the twins rummaged the pools and rocks. I had to keep one eye upon my young brother and sister. During the season they had attended a course of scientific lectures in London, and their newly awakened taste for experimental research was too apt, to my mind, to mani-

fest itself in barbarous vivisection. So I did not scruple to check their zeal when it led them to over-close investigation of the cerebral ganglia of crabs, and the sentient nerves of the smaller sea-fry in general, by threatening to summon them before the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Suddenly leaving their spades and baskets, the infant naturalists rushed violently up to me with the news that Hilda Jarvis and party were coming along the sands.

This was a spectacle offered to all visitors and residents at Boregate about once or twice a week. Dearly the tourists loved to come out and stare at the Bellairs people as they passed. Honestly speaking, it was far better worth seeing than most of the local sights. To female eyes, at least, such a display of the choicest beach costumes, the latest fashions from Trouville and Baden, was a treat indeed. Hilda's toilette was as usual conspicuous among the rest that day, a model of taste and elegance, of appropriate artful simplicity.

Yes, I admired her. It was not possible to look at her without paying a silent tribute to that peculiar air, so perfectly indescribable, so perfectly inimitable, that characterises girls of the higher classes in England, that fascinates foreigners and puzzles them sometimes; for they find it not seldom associated with ignorance, brusquerie, insolence, manners that elsewhere would be called boisterous, and an utter absence of anything that could call itself *spirituel*.

Whether it be an effect of nurture and training, or an inbred quality, the result of descent from a long line of patrician ancestors, or of the judicious admixture of plebeian blood to which our

aristocracy owe so much, that question we may leave to Darwin and his successors. The fact is striking, the quality national.

Put Hilda in beggar clothes, or in any imaginable situation, she would always be marked out, and always command a kind of respect by her unaffected *hauteur*, easy half-insolent grace, as different from the laboured superciliousness and fashionable mannerisms of the middle class as from the rowdiness of the great unwashed.

The party to-day numbered about ten or twelve, mostly young people, but with a goodly *chaperon* or two, quite sufficient to keep up appearances. On they filed, idling slowly up the beach. Prodigiousity of money has long ceased to be an aristocratic virtue, it is even vulgar; but time is a commodity the ostentatious waste of which still lends a certain prestige.

Hilda was in front, having shot a good distance ahead of the rest with her cavalier. This gentleman must have been well known by sight at Boregate, for the twins immediately pointed him out to me as 'commonly called the Bellairs *attaché*.' It was said of a certain great man in the last century, that he abused the privilege his sex have of being ugly. The Bellairs *attaché* might be said to abuse the masculine privilege of being handsome. He had a startling, staring, extensive, manly beauty, the effect of which not even the canker of an expression that was vapid wherever it was not bad could exactly destroy.

I watched the pair coolly as they approached—the tall, fair, Anglo-Saxon Hercules, very nearly realising the foreign ideal of an English *milord*, and Hilda, the feminine to it. Was not the varnish of culture and refinement but skin deep in both?

My critical reflections, before

they became too uncivil, were cut short by a suddenly excited curiosity.

What was taking place? Had I stumbled upon a romance in high life? Hilda was talking hard and fast. Never had I seen her so agitated. Her companion only spoke occasionally, but his words seemed to affect her very strangely, to judge from the peculiar expression of her lips, violent changes of colour, and the nervous play of her fingers on her parasol.

Presently she caught sight of me under the cliff. Rather to my surprise she nodded and smiled almost eagerly. Turning to her companion she sent him back to the others on an errand, to find something she said she had dropped, and then hurried up to me. Her manner was most unusual, fluttered, and scared; was it fright or excitement, or both? My fine bird had flown hither from the claws of a hawk.

She asked question after question, vaguely, wildly, scarcely waiting for an answer. I inquired what she had dropped.

'A bracelet,' she replied; and I sent off the twins to look for it.

Then Hilda, who was recovering herself by degrees, began to laugh with an indescribable expression of reviving coquetry.

'I've lost nothing at all, Maisie, you know—slipped it into my parasol on purpose. I wanted to break up our *tête-à-tête*, don't you see? He understood as well as myself that it was all a feint.'

'Tell me who he is.'

'Leopold Meredith. Why, don't you know Leo, Lord Meredith's brother?'

'Not in the least. I think I shall know him again, though.'

'Ah, he's good-looking, is he not?'

'Well,' said I spitefully, 'I

think all the red has gone out of his cheeks into his hair.'

'Maisie !'

'Seriously, Hilda, if he were a king he would go down to posterity as "le Bel," for his good looks would be sure to outshine all his other qualities, bad or good.'

'But all his goodness lies there, I'm afraid. I must warn you, Maisie, on no account to fall in love with him. He's a shocking character, my dear. There is nothing he hasn't done.'

'Tell me something he has.'

'Well, his last and least iniquitous proceeding was to go through the Bankruptcy Court,' said Hilda, with a little shrug. 'He is a man—O, you would never understand.'

'Shall I tell you how I misunderstood him ?' I retorted.

'Well ?'

'He is an officer ; is, or has been, grand at cricket, a dead shot, dances to distraction, drinks to intoxication, swears to admiration ; cannot read or write with ease, but has a vast experience of the wicked world, and knows how to apply it. Of his love affairs, *till now*, perhaps the less said the better.'

Hilda laughed awkwardly. 'You know Leopold Meredith by reputation, Maisie, that is clear.'

'On my word, no. Have I guessed right ?'

'Perhaps. I told you he had an awful character. Some people think him too fast for respectable society ; but mamma *would* ask him here. She thinks his brother will die soon, and he will be Lord Meredith. As for me—' and she hesitated.

'Are you trying to reform him, bring him back to the fold of respectable society ?' I asked, rallying. 'A dangerous game, Hilda.'

'But, Maisie, remember he hasn't a shilling. So one can flirt

with him quite safely. At least, so I thought,' she added, forcing a laugh.

Only one who knew Hilda well, like myself, could have perceived how agitated she still was. Her manner startled and perplexed me afresh.

'Hilda, what has he been saying to you ?'

'He—who ?'

'Mr. Meredith.'

'O, well, Maisie, he has been making a scene, that's all. But it ruffled me somehow. I could not have faced the others with him after that. How foolish we should both have looked !'

As I thought, she had come to me for a breathing space.

'What a fund of insolence there is in every man !' she resumed impatiently, after a pause. 'Still, I scarcely thought even *he* would have dared to speak as he has done.'

'Did he ask you to marry him, Hilda ?'

'Yes—no—I don't know now what he said, and I can't tell you anything, Maisie, except that I hate him. He is going away, going to-morrow, and his regiment is ordered to India next winter. I never wish to see him again.'

'Did you tell him so ?'

'Yes. He offered to sell out and stay.'

'And that you declined ?'

'Flatly.'

'Insufficiency of income, I suppose.'

'Why, yes. Even you must see, Maisie, that he is not a man to marry. He never will be Lord Meredith. His father lingered on, an incurable invalid, till seventy-six ; and the eldest son means to do the same and out-live Leopold. The doctors say he's an iron constitution ; Lady Meredith told me so herself, poor thing. And a ruined army spend-

thrift is not exactly the *parti* for me. Papa would never allow it. I know Leo will be grateful some day that I didn't take him at his word.'

'Hilda, does every man you meet wish to marry you? I exclaimed vehemently.

'They give me to think so mostly,' she said, laughing; 'but don't be jealous; for recollect I can only marry one. There, my party are waiting for me, and I must join them. Good-bye, Maisie dear; and be sure you come to see me soon.'

And she went to meet the others with a smooth brow, bright eyes, and voluble lips. But I noticed that the Bellairs *attaché* kept aloof, silent and morose. The half-sullen, half-savage look on his face was neither becoming nor mannerly. But Hilda's self-command must have been intensely provoking.

'Mr. Meredith has proposed,' thought I, as I watched them both. 'She has refused him point blank. He is incensed, for he is in love with her, as he understands it, and not accustomed to be crossed in his attachments. I say she is in love also, after her manner. How will it end? It has ended, she declares; but I do not believe that. See, their eyes meet by accident. The last word of that little comedy has not been spoken yet.'

As the procession wound past me once more, I reviewed them all in general, and Leopold Meredith in particular. Vainly I sought in the tawny athlete, his markedly animal physiognomy, expressionless eye, and unpleasantly expressive mouth some charm, somebody's ideal. 'Good for a gladiator!' thought I, in superb disdain. And then, beside Hilda's wooer, rose up in my mind's eye another figure. What a contrast to yonder

slightly-polished savage!—manhood, with the full charm of strength, intensified by the charm of refinement.

The Bellairs *attaché*, I gathered, took his dismissal as final, as it was meant. He was missed from the Jarvis party next time they were seen on the sands. His disappearance became the theme of much gossip among the tatlers of the town. Considering that Bellairs did not profess to know Boregate, even to bow to, and that the Jarvises took scrupulous good care to have, with the exception of our envied selves, no acquaintance in the town, it was charitable of the town to feel such an intense interest as it did in that family. The inhabitants took it quite to heart that Hilda had not yet married. She was twenty-three, with several sisters 'coming on,' and for beauty had few rivals in the county. The young lady must be hard to please. But things had so chanced that, though Hilda's admirers were legion, no really eligible *parti* had yet, in fact, come forward, and that Sir John Jarvis's daughter should be proof against the obsolete attractions of 'love in-a cottage' was not to be wondered at. Even the Honourable Leopold must admit this, and abide by the melancholy outcome, not having a very brilliant establishment to offer her at that moment.

In the course of the next few weeks there came frequent invitations to Bellairs. I was often in request there, especially when music was wanted, and these visits had ever been the single dissipation Boregate afforded. This autumn, however, I drew back when I could, to my mother's surprise and despair. I had never objected before, she urged, and they wanted me to sing, and so forth. Alas, the avowed use of music at

Bellairs, and I knew it of old, was to promote conversation. Let no amateur at Lady Jarvis's lay the flattering unction to his soul that his tweedledum would be distinguished from his neighbour's tweedledee. That was a drawing-room where the most brazen beginner and the most accomplished artist would be *not* listened to with the strictest impartiality, and praised and thanked afterwards in exactly the same extravagant terms. It was amusing at first; indeed a great deal that was amusing, if not strictly edifying, often went on under that roof. Only I seemed suddenly to have sickened of it. Bellairs and I were fated to become estranged from each other. The dowagers looked askance at me. I could not sororise with their daughters, or even lay traps for their sons. So I saw Hilda seldom, and never alone. Not many weeks later the party broke up for a time. She and her parents went away visiting, and for a month Bellairs afforded no fresh theme for conversation to the admiring seaside population around.

CHAPTER IX.

YES OR NO.

THE last word of the *Portent* was written, and I had forwarded it, through Eva, to the Priory. Mr. Gerard and his mother, she wrote back, were still away, visiting, she believed, in the country. Soon after she came down to stay with us at Boregate. And she had planned for me to accompany her back to Westburn, a prospect which absorbed my thoughts and intents thenceforth. Meanwhile I continued to see all the world, Boregate included, in rose colour; made friends with

the sea, learnt almost to love the lighthouse and the shingle. Eva and I took long coast rambles together, bent on making studies of the sea-birds, that she might paint the gulls, cormorants, petrels, and gannets in their native haunts and rocky fastnesses.

She had completely won the hearts of the twins. Over all children she seemed to exercise a singular influence, akin to the half-mesmeric power which enabled her so easily to tame her canaries. My mother was charmed with her, in a weak way, though she mourned at times to see her, and not Hilda, my *alter ego*.

The Jarvises were now back again at Bellairs, which was reported to be growing gayer and gayer every day; with garden, shooting, and dancing parties, not to mention the favourite match-making distractions seldom absent from an English country house.

Yielding to my mother's pathetic entreaties, I started one afternoon, taking Eva with me, to walk over to Bellairs, to pay our long-deferred respects.

It was one of those nice bracing seaside days, bright, as if the east wind had swept off the atmosphere, chilling and autumnal with the shadow of winter somewhere. We toiled perseveringly along the high-road, hair blown over our faces, boots and skirts overclouded with dust. We looked at each other, and our countenances fell as we thought disconsolately of Bellairs and the daintily decked-out damsels of lawn or library.

'How mean, to stand in such awe of one's fellow-creatures!' I exclaimed, laughing.

'And of your own friends, too.'

'Save me from them,' I murmured devoutly. 'Prepare, Eva,

to face a brigade of female fashionables in full armour—with the shield of fine clothes, the buckler of rank, the sword of superciliousness, the helmet of *chic*. Prospectively I feel like David before Goliath, and without his sling.'

'I do pity you. These people are nothing to me, nor I to them, so I cannot care what they say or think of me.'

'Do you suppose I care?' said I indignantly.

'It looks like it.'

I felt that it did, and replied lamely,

'O, you don't understand. I only dread, nervously speaking, their critical glances, patronising speeches, the false position—Hullo, what's that?' I concluded, suddenly startled, and cut short in my tirade, by the sound of galloping horses in the rear. 'Who comes so fast? It must be a doctor, or a fire-engine, or a butcher, or a mail-cart.'

It was neither, but Miss Hilda Jarvis herself, driving home her celebrated cream-coloured ponies.

Not *driving*. They appeared to have taken fright, and were tearing headlong madly down the road. Hilda still held the reins, attempting to guide, though powerless to check, the spirited animals. About fifty yards ahead of us was a railway crossing. To our horror, we saw that the gates were closed. The keeper stood smoking a pipe complacently in the field, with his back turned. By the time that the ponies have well smashed the carriage and themselves to pieces against the bars he will, perhaps, be on the spot, and begin to think of picking them up. The catastrophe seemed imminent. Instinctively I dashed at the gate, reached it in time, flung and held it open, whilst Eva hurried into the field

and shrieked at the official to rouse him to action. The road, beyond the crossing, wound round a corner, up hill: she signed to the man to cut across and intercept the ponies.

They flew through the gate, jerked the carriage safely over the rails, turned the corner, and bolted up the lane, having fortunately slightly slackened their pace, thus enabling Eva and the gatekeeper she had brought to the rescue to seize their heads without much risk, and stop them.

It seemed all the work of a moment. The next, Hilda was down, inspecting their knees.

She looked a little pale, but was not in the least upset by her danger and narrow escape. Having first made certain that her ponies were uninjured, she turned to us with a profusion of praise for our courage and presence of mind, which, however, were not to be compared with what she herself had shown.

Of course she must drive the ponies round to the stables herself. She bade us go on, saying we should find each other again presently at Bellairs.

'By the way, Maisie,' she observed carelessly, as she stepped into the carriage, 'there is a friend of yours staying with us, you must hear.'

'A friend of mine?' said I incredulously.

'Yes, Mr. Gerard,' taking the reins.

'Indeed! When did he arrive?'

'Last night. We made his acquaintance some weeks ago, when we were staying at Lord Meredith's, and mamma asked him down. He says he knows you very well. *Au revoir*;' and she drove on, laughing.

'It was very inconsiderate of Mr. Gerard not to have been in the pony-carriage too,' observed Eva

archly. 'And then we might have had the pleasure of saving his life as well.'

The same idea had occurred to me directly; and it would have been gratifying, I own. But this unexpected news of his presence so near, at Bellairs, confounded me, delighted me too, of course—but the feeling was mixed.

Silently we walked through the fine but monotonous park. Before us lay the unparalleled archery-walk and croquet-ground, and a garden that had been brilliant not long ago. But an early frost had come and blackened the geraniums and lobelias.

'Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.'

The façade of Bellairs was handsome, extensive, white, Corinthian, with large plate-glass windows, and speckless flight of steps leading to the door.

'Maisie,' said Eva timidly, 'I see Sir John Jarvis himself standing in the portico.'

'No, you don't,' said I hurriedly, stifling a laugh; '*it's the butler*. They're exactly alike. They always are. Will nobody ever account for that mysterious fact in natural history?'

The solemn personage in question gave orders for us to be shown into the library, where we found a number of ladies beginning to get a little tired of their lace-work, and in impatient anticipation of tea and gentlemen.

It was a remarkable feature of life at Bellairs, that it seemed to alternate between the two extremes of gaiety and boredom. The Jarvises and their set had no prejudices, and the soberer country gentry shook their heads over the amount and the tone of the dissipation carried on there in the evenings. As if to make up for this, dull beyond all conception

was the picture it presented in the afternoon. Our call was welcomed as a ripple on this stagnation. Hilda entered almost at the same moment, and entertained everybody with a florid account of our late adventure. So florid, indeed, that it sounded new, and I listened half expecting the addition of a train coming along, to heighten the general sensation. Eva and I were handed round, like a curiosity, for inspection and admiration. An irresistible inclination to laugh came over me, as I modestly reflected that we had done nothing more than open a gate and awaken a lethargic official—what any little boy will do any day for a penny.

But the story kept conversation alive till the tea and claret-cup, and at last the shooting-party, came in. The latter for the most part looked sleepy, able-bodied, but beef-witted and vacant: all but one. Jasper Gerard stood out among the rest, as signally apart as a Caucasian among Caffres. What fellowship, what communion could he have with these rudimentary heroes, except in caste? None, perhaps. But I under-reckoned the force of the exception.

Presently he came and threw himself into a chair near me. Was he tired, or ill, or bored, or vexed? He seemed absent, and talked with an effort. We were perfectly polite, perfectly friendly, perfectly formal. It was not only the hollyhock and the tiger-lily that hung heavily to-day.

Something, I suppose the perception of the change in him, had suddenly knocked all the brains out of my head, and I felt as imbecile as a little lieutenant of dragoons who sat opposite me—a Dundreary in the bud, a young man who had always forgotten what he was going to say, but who, with perseverance worthy of a

better cause, was spending his best energies in trying to make a lady-bird tipsy off a drop of claret-cup.

Presently Hilda came up and carried me away, to take a turn with some of the party on the lawn, and I resigned myself unresistingly; anything to awake from the nightmare of that *tête-à-tête*.

Hilda and I soon separated ourselves from the rest. She drew me down with her into a lower part of the garden, a wilderness of mouldering dahlias and straggling larkspurs. Hilda began to snip off with her scissors a few feeble summer flowers that had still a semblance of life and bloom to show.

'I so wanted to see you, Maisie. It is a long, long time since I had an opportunity of talking to you alone.'

'Not since that day—"we met, 'twas on the sands"—about six weeks ago,' said I carelessly.

'Ah, you recollect that?'

'Pretty well.'

'Did I seem to you a little confused or excited that morning?' she asked curiously.

'For you—yes.'

'And by what Mr. Meredith had been saying to me?'

'So I imagined.'

'I *was* provoked,' she returned hastily—'offended even; and no wonder. You must see why, Maisie. That a man like him—a man who is over head and ears in debt, who is not on terms with his nearest relations, whose name has appeared in more than one scandalous affair—should have the audacity to suppose—' She seemed to blush at the very recollection. 'He is no husband for me, no *gendre* for my parents.'

'Yet you were not absolutely indifferent to him, Hilda.'

'What has that to do with it?' she said hurriedly. 'His father disinherited him; his own bro-

ther will have nothing to say to him. The whole family have broken with Leo, because of his fast habits. Not that he's a bit worse than many others. It is only that he makes no pretence, where they do.'

'Is he fond of you?' I asked.

'Immensely,' she said, with an odd, half-wistful smile; 'mad at being sent away. He proposed to leave the army, and that we should live in a small house at Bayswater. Fancy me living in a small house at Bayswater!' and she laughed rather affectedly. 'Ah, Maisie, love and matrimony have nothing to do together, and it was a mistake ever to try and introduce them. Perhaps I may never see Leo again. And what I want you to do is to forget that little scene.'

'If you mean to ignore it, I promise.'

'That will do. But stay, dear; there's something else I want to talk to you about.'

We had anchored on a rustic bench. Trees and bushes screened us; we were out of sight and hearing of every one. There was a pause. But I felt a duel in the air.

Then she fired her first shot, saying frankly,

'It is about Mr. Gerard. What is your opinion of him?'

'Mine?' in tone of surprise.

'O, I value your judgment of people immensely.'

'But why do you want it on Mr. Gerard in particular?' said I coldly; 'and what has he done to require a character from me, or any one, and to you?'

'To make a long story short, Maisie, he is my last conquest.'

'Indeed? O, pray let me hear the particulars of the campaign,' said I, in the same tone. 'Where did it come off? and how was the prize won?'

'O, in fair fight, Maisie. It all

happened at Lord Meredith's. Before Mr. Gerard came, the girls there were talking him over, abusing him for being rude and fastidious, and so on. None of them believed that he would come, though he had been pressed. They all agreed he was a horrid superior sort of creature, who despised society, but very good-looking, and the most agreeable of men when he chose. He can snub people he doesn't like, very true; but I made up my mind he shouldn't snub me.'

And she raised her handsome head with a smile. Of all the daughters of men there were few fairer than she.

'Well, he came. Perhaps his mother over-persuaded him. And Lord Meredith had just received a large collection of statues and odds and ends he had bought from some one in Italy. Nobody in the house knew anything about them; but Mr. Gerard, who knows everything, was tempted to come down to see them. Some people care for such things—Venuses with their noses off, dingy-coloured lamps and figures; it appears he does. I never could; and it was all I could do to pretend to admire the collection. However, it brought him.

'I never took so much trouble to turn any man's head in my life,' she continued frankly, 'and was more and more impelled to go on trying, because he *seemed* so provokingly indifferent that I fancied I had failed; and I couldn't bear to think that.'

'Seemed?' I repeated inquiringly.

'Till, by an accident, I discovered that I had succeeded better, far better, than I intended. Mrs. Gerard—'

'Well?' said I.

'Let out the secret to an intimate friend of mine, who of course came directly and told me what

she had said—that Jasper was more seriously in love than she had ever seen him in his life; that she was delighted, as her one wish now is to see him settled, and—'

'And?' I raised my eyes, and met in hers an expression of settled triumph.

'She has asked me to go and stay at their place, the Priory, Maisie, somewhere near London. Shall I go?'

I said nothing.

'Because, you know,' she continued, 'after what I have heard, and his manner to me since then, I can't blind myself to what will probably be the consequence of my visit.'

'You will see the Priory,' said I sarcastically, 'and find out how you like it.'

'Exactly,' said Hilda, unabashed. 'I *should* like to see the place before I accept the man.'

'And shall you do so after, if the property is satisfactory?'

'I cannot make up my mind.'

'Is it Mr. Meredith?'

Hilda denied it.

'I never think of Leo when he isn't there. True, when he is I can think of nothing else. It's different with Mr. Gerard. I don't pretend to *care* exactly for the man himself; but I can do pretty well what I please with him. He's thoroughly well off. *Que voulez-vous?*'

Every word she spoke went like iron into my soul. Hilda's creed was not holy, I knew; but it was flat blasphemy to hear it thus applied to my idol.

Lady Jarvis's voice was heard calling for her daughter, and Hilda rose with a start. We returned to join the others.

Eva and I were pressed to stay the evening; and as they would take no refusal, and offered to send us back in the carriage, we must needs remain.

Bellairs put on its best face that night. There was no screaming mirth or vulgarity to disgust Mr. Gerard; and I could well understand the certain subtle charm that establishment might have for him. A place where everything seemed to go of itself, so smoothly, and with no creaking of the wheels: the cool luxurious drawing-room, the perfect dinner, tastefully arranged dishes and flowers,—all, down to the rose-water in the finger-glasses, was an ideal of life (material) in clover, where whatever was wanted came as a matter of course, and a thousand little pleasant superfluities suggested themselves on every side. Of the majority of the party it might be said that they could never have shone singly, but they suited each other; and thus met together, the result was almost sparkling in its way.

I thought that superfine dinner would never end. I doubt if any one else felt it too long. Not Jasper, certainly. He was opposite, and Hilda beside him, in charming spirits, subdued in talking, for her, but looking how bright and lovely! I saw him glance at her once or twice with an admiration so frank and deep that it was almost deferential, and told more than the most ostentatious attentions. I was bewildered, not knowing what to believe, and with a vague feeling that ten minutes' conversation with him would set everything right. After dinner he came and talked to me a little, thanked me for the libretto, said it had been forwarded to Theodore Marston, and received full approval, he believed. But he was desperately preoccupied—there was an absorbing thought in his mind; nor could I doubt within myself what that thought was.

When Eva and I took leave we were invited to come again to spend the next day. I declined, pleading some slight engagement, and declined with such decision that directly we were in the carriage Eva expressed her surprise.

'Why were you so bent on refusing?' she asked innocently.

And I repeated what Hilda had told me.

'O, but you should have accepted,' she said reproachfully.

'What?' I exclaimed, laughing convulsively, 'enter the lists with Hilda? Engage in a contemptible struggle for a man who does not know how to choose between us?'

'You are too hasty,' she expostulated, 'and not fair to Mr. Gerard. You will find that Miss Jarvis has been taking trifling attentions for more than they ever meant. You have no real proof of the story beyond her word.'

O that I had not! Was it not written over again on Jasper's face? It was not Hilda, but myself, upon whom trifles light as air had worked over-much.

There were two voices haunting me; the first repeating, 'It is now as it was in the beginning, when the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and that was enough; and they took to themselves wives of whom they chose.' But the second cried back vehemently, 'Nay, for the millennium is surely not yet with us, and children and asps should become playfellows, gardens spring up in the desert; before the noble mind and the gentle heart should say to the coldest and most egotistical spirit, "Thou art my life," and to a nature early tainted with false colouring and commonness, "Be thou my love and my bride."'

(To be continued.)

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

SOCIAL CLIQUES AND CLANS.

AMID the phenomena of modern society there is nothing more marked than the inherent tendency of people to break up into cliques and clans. People in London are sometimes severe on the weaknesses of country cousins, and dramatists and novelists have made themselves merry about the gossip and tittle-tattle of country towns and villages. The fact is, that the same sort of thing goes on in town, only under altered conditions. We do not gossip about our neighbours, for we do not know or care to know who our next-door neighbour may be. But town people gossip about their set just as country people gossip about their neighbours. In drawing-rooms and clubs we live under a brisk fire of mutually destructive criticism. By some process of natural selection, which probably includes a good deal of vanity and assumption, people elect themselves into cliques and vote themselves as the *crème de la crème*. This is not very sociable, but then society has its revenge. The amusement of a clique is generally the vivisection of the members. In the same way the old clannish spirit is still abroad. Hallam says that the crusader has toned down into the modern gentleman, and in the same way the old clan spirit still finds its modern equivalent.

This is one of the mixed matters where it is necessary to arbitrate before we can attempt to strike a balance. Everywhere, for good or ill, we see the influence of cliques and clans. There are some minds

so wide that they take all human nature as their province, and make all human sympathies their own. But the general tendency is the other way. It is a tendency to narrowness and provincialism. There are many people in London who cannot rise to the sense of imperial or even of civic interests. They provincialise. They run off in the direction of districts and vestries. They get what Mr. Bumble called a 'parochial mind.' Thus there are lots of little provincial papers scattered about the metropolis. A man of the E.C. Postal District avows that he is a totally different being from the man of the S.W. District in all his sympathies and interests. The disintegrating influence is strong upon him. It cannot be said that he gives up to party what was meant for mankind, for his mind never owned such a broad conception as humanity. He essentially belongs to a clique or a clan of an unmitigable kind.

Undoubtedly the domination of clique has a good deal that is unhealthy about it. We know the story of the Trinity man who expressed great contempt for the members of the small colleges, but compassionately added 'that they too were God's creatures.' The whole country is full of class distinctions to an irrational and un-Christian extent. Country people and town people, prelates and parsons, professions and trades, merchants and shopkeepers, all rigidly observe a kind of imaginary equatorial line. At every county ball—county balls are not now what they once were—you see the gradations of rank, you detect the

coterie and the clique. Nowhere is the line drawn so rigidly as among the shopkeeping classes themselves. A duke will put himself upon equal terms with his tenants, but as a rule the wholesale dealer will not meet the retail dealer on terms of social equality. We should despair of properly stating or of properly understanding the various shades and hues below the 'upper middle.' From an ignorance, however, of these distinctions you may give the deadliest offence when you meant the most extreme politeness. A man loses caste awfully who, after going to a regular ball, goes to a tradesman's ball. A rising young professional man was once met at one of these parties, and considerable surprise was expressed by one of his acquaintance at meeting him there. 'Well, the fact is,' he said, 'I meet all my tics there, and manage to keep them in good-humour for ever so long.' It is noticeable that in all these social gatherings there are generally two or three cliques to be found, and, metaphorically speaking, mountains rise and oceans roll between these different cliques.

Some curious illustrations might be given of the tendency of the insular English to break up into cliques and clans. If a quarrel breaks out all along the country side, there is an eager tendency to take sides vehemently. It is just like the poor English coachman who 'assisted' at a revolution on the Boulevards of Paris. He saw some fighting going on, and rushed in to take a side, and got shot down at once. Suppose a man has acted ill towards some lady, or a lady has acted ill towards a gentleman and jilted him. It is not enough that A and B, the *quondam* lovers, should become enemies, but all A's friends vehemently hate and detest all B's

friends. In this way it happens that in some parts of the country it is impossible to get up a dinner-party because no two families are on dining terms.

In Whig political life the power of the literary clique has made itself greatly felt. This has undoubtedly been a very honourable distinction to the Whig party. They may fairly count Holland House among their glories, and Lady Palmerston's assemblies controlled many divisions. Holland House encouraged literature and art, and in return literature and art have always done homage to Holland House. Without any doubt, the Whig literary and political coteries did vast service for their party, and did much for many long years in diverting political sympathies from the Tories, and insuring a long-continued ostracism from office. The Tories did not so much care for literature. This was a blunder. It is a blunder persisted in, for it now claims historical prescription. Their cliques were fashionable cliques. They did not even admit Lord Byron to be a member of the highest society. What did they think of that imperious old lady of Holland House, who ordered Allen about as if he were a lackey, and bade the great Macaulay hold his tongue, while the form of the 'great Captain of the age' moved about at their assemblies, and the best English beauty and brightness glorified their *salons*.

No doubt the effects of a clique in helping a man on are very great, and the help is often in a perfectly legitimate way. Towards the end of the first quarter of the century, there were some Cambridge men who were called, or who styled themselves, the Apostles; as a rule they took to legal and literary pursuits. One of them wrote in a fashionable magazine; another was a potent voice in a

daily paper; a third had achieved a reputation by some work. And when one of the brotherhood had done anything notable, all the rest combined in patting him on the back and calling on the world to admire the new prodigy who was springing up in their midst. In fact they constituted a kind of Mutual Admiration Society, which is not a bad sort of club for a man to belong to. Similarly, when any well-known literary man who has picked up a large connection in the course of time publishes a book, it would be very hard, and indeed unnatural, for his friends not to do what little they honestly can in his favour. There are instances known of absolutely worthless novels being pushed into a second or perhaps even a third edition, because a large number of personal friends agree in calling attention to it all over the country. The Fourth Estate is certainly a very potent one. You might put into a single room, and that not a very large one, the people by whom the public opinion of England is mainly manufactured. There are some forty or fifty men whose names are almost entirely unknown, who are far more potent than the same number of members of either House, who do the chief leader-writing and criticism of the country. Their united power might be irresistible, but happily they are atoms circulating freely in space, and only a few at a time come into mutual attraction or collision. At the same time the *cognoscenti* cannot calculate on any absolute certitude. The books which have been belauded must sometimes sink by their own gravity, and others, as in the case of *Jane Eyre*, unhelpt by any clique, have monopolised the popularity of the libraries, and laid the foundations of fame and fortune.

Every man belongs socially to

his clique or set. Like separate drops, individuals agglomerate; these form larger spheres; they develop into circles—ranges of society. But these spreading circles are ruled by invariable social laws, and cannot be distinctly traced beyond a limited range; they are then lost in the ocean of the world. No doubt there is something very helpful to society in this arrangement. Government by party is the highest political development of this social law. Now and then there is some aberrative individual who declines coöperating with his party; but in the very act of declining he forms a party—a party which generally consists of himself and one infatuated follower; reminders of Mr. Bright's famous terrier, where it is difficult to detect which is the head and which the tail. Nowhere more, as we have hinted, than in the region of politics, is there observable the influence of the clique or clan. How is it that all the Cavendishes and Russells and Greys are Whigs? Can we imagine that a Russell or a Cavendish should strike out an independent course of his own, and declare that his convictions compel him to give a fervid support to the Ministry of Lord Beaconsfield? Would not this be looked upon as an appalling phenomenon in modern history? Now no one supposes that the human mind necessarily works in the same Whig groove every generation. But, often enough, the human mind has nothing in the world to do with it. It is the clique or clan that has sometimes assumed quite an historical development? The Elliots and the Greys, not to mention other families, Whig and Tory, have always been true to the colours of their party, and to the perquisites of place when their party is in power.

In fact, it does not pay for a man to be a monad. Strength is always to be sought for in combination. And this shows us how the clique rises to the higher and more permanent form of the clan. An old family seems to strengthen itself by fresh interests and alliances. It has been the traditional policy of many families to do this systematically; and thus it often happens that a family becomes a real voice and interest in the country—we even meet with families who have almost added county to county in their territory—and have divided half-a-dozen peerages among themselves. It is in this way that clans are formed and cliques built up. The strength and weight of this clan feeling are often wonderful. All the members stand shoulder to shoulder. A man may be a worthless man—an acknowledged *mauvais sujet*—the head of his house may objugate and threaten him with expulsion; but for all that, as a member of the family party, he is an object of regard, and almost of veneration. It is felt that he has a claim to be favoured; and if any good thing turns up they are clamorous in his favour, and use most vehement language in their testimonials.

The strength of the family feeling is remarkable, and more than is often supposed to be the case. If you touch one, that unit moves the whole of the series. They form a compact circle, and they take care that no good thing within that circle ever wanders to an outsider if they can help it. And so it is that we have mining families, manufacturing families, legal families, banking families, army and navy families. They understand the whole workings and traditions of this line of life. The sons are regularly bred to it, and the daughters married into it. It is a kind of family

heir-loom. And even if they do not become a caste, as sometimes happens, they play into each other's hands, and at all events retain a strong clannish feeling. Generally there is some individual who is the acknowledged head of it, and the members cluster around as bees round their queen. We see the full strength of this in the Scottish clans, the loyalty to a Douglas or a MacCallum More; but all over the country there are clans invisible to the naked eye, where families, who are hardly known to be families, acknowledge a head, and delight in the gilded volumes which tell of the ramifications of their line.

Moreover, what we call professional feeling has a good deal of the clique and clan together. After all, men of the same profession, though they generally live in chronic rivalry, hang a great deal together. They have common interests and sympathies. Gibbon, in his autobiography, laments that he had not taken up the law as a calling. He thought he might have got on better. People would have been more likely to support him and help him on. Gibbon might have added that a man should not only belong to a profession, but to a clique or clan in a profession. Thus too it is in the Church. A man will not do very well for himself if he relies broadly on his churchmanship. He should belong to a party, and then as a party moves on he moves on or is moved on himself. The blind impetus of the movement carries him on, be he ever so stupid. When a man has fought in the same ranks with you for a number of years, an irresistible impression grows up that something must be done for him. And what things will not people do under such circumstances! Some time ago a lady sailed into a drawing-room where

she was always a welcome visitor, and taking her seat on the sofa, declared her intention of not leaving the sofa until the people of the house promised to give a friend of hers a living which was then vacant. He was hardly a friend, only an interesting Ritualist in whom she felt interested. The patron thought of the distant cousin in Dorsetshire whom he would so much like to befriend; but the wiles and entreaties of the great lady were irresistible, and the thing was done. The moral is that although, broadly considered, cliques and clans may not further the best interests of society, still man was not meant to be a monad, and he who swears black and white, according to his clique or clan, has those who will back him up in the world, and 'see him through' in the difficulties of life.

SOME NEW BOOKS.

At this season of the year there is generally a fortunate predominance of art literature. Thus Mr. A. T. Trollope gives us a gorgeous work on Italy, and M. Viardot on all schools of painting. Another work emerging from the mass is the life of Titian by Mr. Crowe and M. Cavalcasella.* These gentlemen have worked before in prosperous partnership, in their well-known works on the history of painting in North Italy and on the Early Flemish School. Mr. Crowe was at one time likely to take his place as an historian, but he has thought fit to concentrate his work on art biography. The volumes have some fine illustrations of some of Titian's more remarkable works; the 'Danae' and the 'Venus Anadyomene' represent one class; 'Titian's Daughter,' the same whom he could not dower for so

long because the State did not make its payments, is another; the 'Battle of Cadore' and 'Prometheus Bound' are noble specimens of two different kinds. Then we have the scriptural subjects—'The Presentation in the Temple,' 'Christ at Emmaus,' 'Christ in the Prætorian Court.' A large portion of the work consists of art criticisms on the paintings, which, like Dr. Waagen's well-known work, will be interesting and useful to art-students. The authors are able to give some fresh information respecting Titian's family, but they are not able to add much to what is known respecting Titian himself. We must still consult Vasari and Mr. Josiah Gilbert's charming book, 'Titian's Country, Cadore.' The first volume brings us to the close of Titian's great struggle for fame, and his triumphant position as an artist. Some of his best work was done when he was an old man. Like other artists he was under the temptation of doing too much in the way of portraits and too little in the way of painting. He had made a lordly fortune; he had surrounded his home with all elegance and every refinement. We read in the Letter books of 'dinners and suppers in which Titian and his friends and guests had delicacies in season copiously served on luxurious tables.' But all the time he was an indefatigable labourer, working up to his ninety-fifth year. He accumulated considerable treasures, and he was also an adept in concealing the treasures which he accumulated. When he was ordered to give a return of his taxables, he did so in a way which ought subsequently to have elicited a conscience-stricken letter and remittance to the Venetian Treasury. Titian was in the midst of the greatest men and the greatest events of the sixteenth century.

* *Titian, his Life and Times.* By J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcasella. In two vols. (Murray.)

He was at Augsburg after the decisive battle of Muhlburg, and painted the emperor, the great people of his court, and the captive princes. He went to Charles as poor as a painter and came back as rich as a prince. Charles took one of Titian's sacred paintings with him to the monastery of Yuste, to assist him in his meditations. After the great victory of Lepanto, which some historians hold to have utterly shaken the Moslem power and others say had no permanent effect whatever, he was commissioned by the Republic of Venice to paint a picture in commemoration. Titian not only painted the great men and great events, but also the Italian heroines of his age, great ladies like Vittoria Colonna and Isabella d'Este. Fifty years of practice brought Titian to absolute mastery in his art; 'distribution, movement, outline, modelling, atmosphere, and distance are all perfect.' Titian painted two pictures of 'The Entombment,' at a distance of thirty years from each other, and it is interesting to refer to the criticism of the authors in which they compare music and painting: 'Less rich in tints, less engaging in form, less solemn in features, the *dramatis personæ* at Madrid are superior to those of the Louvre, inasmuch as they are more true to Nature and have a deeper meaning. Less highly coloured, they bear closer inspection, and the nude especially is modelled with appropriate shadow of tone, with a decision and firmness which left almost nothing for subsequent blending or glazing. It is, in fact, as if we should distinguish the grand doctrine and depth of Bach from the playful and melodious power of Mozart, or compare the profound but realistic Rembrandt with the brilliant and cavalier-like Van Dyke.' Titian

died in Venice of the plague, and, notwithstanding that season of terror, was honoured with a public funeral. His son, Orazio, died a few days afterwards at a place near the Lido. No one was left in charge of the painter's residence, so thieves broke into the house, and many precious relics were stolen or destroyed.

Another art book should be mentioned among the crowd of rich presentation books which are brought forward at this season of the year; one which is very striking in design and execution. Mrs. Oliphant's work on Florence is of a very graceful and instructive kind. Under the title of *The Makers of Florence*,* Mrs. Oliphant discusses Dante, Giotto, and Savonarola and their city. The subject of Florence is much worn. The literature belonging to Dante, and only in one degree less to Savonarola, is immense; Giotto takes his place—a foremost one—with the group of the builders of the Duomo. But the story of Florence is one which deserves to be freshly told to new readers by new writers. It is here that Mrs. Oliphant's great ability and practised literary training come excellently into place. To great attainments and vast industry she adds a poetry and measure of taste which insures a fascinating treatment to any subject which she undertakes. We can hardly wish our young readers better fortune than to make their first acquaintance with the great worthies of Florence under the skilful guidance of Mrs. Oliphant. We suppose that the most profound criticism of Dante that we have in the language is by the present Dean of St. Paul's; but Mrs. Oliphant's animated narrative, with the view which she gives

* *The Makers of Florence*. By Mrs. Oliphant. (Macmillan.)

of Dante's poetry, is an admirable introduction of its kind. The work has a portrait of Dante, engraved by Jeens, and various illustrations from Professor Delamotte's drawings. Mrs. Oliphant's conclusion is written in that tone of fine eloquence and feeling which we naturally associate with her. She has quoted Michel Angelo's fine sonnet, which concludes thus :

'O, thoughts that tempt us, idle, sweet,
and vain,
Where are ye when a double death
draws near,
One here, one threatening an eternal
loss?
Painting and sculpture now are no more
gain
To still the soul turn'd to that God-
head dear,
Stretching great arms out to us from
His cross.'

She tells the story how Michel Angelo promised Francis of France an equestrian statue on the day when he should free Florence from her tyrants. 'But Francis died, and this last effort was not even attempted. And Florence and her freedom died too for weary centuries, lying motionless with the Twilight and the Dawn, the Night and the Day, watching by her ashes in melancholy splendour ; though now, we trust, she is alive again, to take up, with better hopes and more harmonious surroundings, the great, noble, uncompleted story of her life.'

The History of the Painters of all Schools is a book of real and permanent value.* The well-known French art-writer, M. Viardot, has visited all the great picture-galleries of Europe, and made his critical notes with the pictures before his eyes. The introductions to the foreign schools condense much useful knowledge, and the English editor has added from a variety of sources such biographical

and critical notices as were deficient in the original work. Altogether, to the student and the picture-lover, this well-illustrated and convenient handbook is a work of reference which will hold its place on the shelf beside our favourite artistic manuals. By the true art-lover it will be found a pleasant companion and remembrancer when holiday leisure permits the examination of any of the great galleries of the Continent.

In his *Historic Châteaux** Mr. A. Baillie Cochrane gives us the history of the fortress-palaces of France, Blois, Fontainebleau, and Vincennes, mainly in relation to the great crimes that have been perpetrated in them. The title of the work suggests a larger subject and a more thorough treatment. Most travellers in France are familiar with those three remarkable places, and a book describing their history and giving an account of antiquities and contents would be thankfully received. Mr. Cochrane treats his *châteaux* with special reference to some of the crowned criminals of history. They are known, as the Tower of London is known, as the scene of historical horrors. Blois, Fontainebleau, and Vincennes respectively recall the murder of the Duke of Guise by his King, the murder of Monaldeschi by Queen Christina, and the murder of the Duc d'Enghien by the command of Napoleon, and probably at the instigation of Talleyrand. Blois has its associations with the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the career of the poisoner Catherine de Medicis. Fontainebleau has whole clusters of Napoleonic associations which are left entirely untouched. When we were last there, in the days of the Second Empire, we heard a curious and

* *The History of the Painters of all Schools*. By Louis Viardot and other writers. (Sampson Low & Co.)

* *Historic Châteaux*. By Alexander Baillie Cochrane, M.P. (Hurst & Blackett.)

somewhat ominous story—how Napoleon the Third had fallen into the big pond full of carp. We should have liked to have had this little incident authentically told. Moreover, while Christina's story is thoroughly well worn, the later Napoleonic story of Fontainebleau has never been fully worked out. Mr. Cochrane has done some little for cultivating an historic taste among novel-readers. It is at times difficult to separate his narrative from a story; he has pictorial description and rapid dialogue. The most novelistic character is certainly that of Queen Christina, who put her chamberlain to death, conceiving that as a crowned head she had a right to do so, even upon foreign soil, because he made fun of her and revealed her secrets. The crime was murder, and she might very probably have been brought to the block. There is an affinity in her character to that of the wilful Gwendoline in *Daniel Deronda*, a work which Lord Beaconsfield ought to read with enthusiasm. By the way, Mr. Cochrane was one of the heroes of Disraeli's Young England romances some forty years ago, which explains a certain vein of chivalry and romance and a *penchant* for historic *châteaux*.

We have nowhere met with pleasanter reading of its kind than the Old Shekarry's *Sports in Many Lands*,* with its wealth of pictorial illustrations and its countless anecdotes of personal adventures. We regret to find from the biographical preface that the author, Major Levison, is now no more. He was one of the most remarkable men of our age. He was only a youth, in the service of the East India Company, when he became renowned as a tiger-slayer. He was

one of the earliest and most conspicuous hunters of large game, and did much to set the fashion which is sending so many of our sportsmen to India and Africa. He was a thorough soldier, and obtained much professional distinction. He was the only English officer employed on the Turkish staff. He did not think much of the Turks. 'We have some Turks, but they are not worth much, and as yet have done nothing but eat and rob. I believe as a body they are the most detestable race of people under the sun, and think that their kingdom will soon pass away into other hands.' Major Levison was with Garibaldi in the Italian Revolution of 1860, but he is not to be confounded with 'Garibaldi's Englishman,' who was, we believe, Colonel Peard of West Cornwall. When he was not in active service he was following all kinds of game in all parts of the world. Being made colonial secretary at Lagos on the West Coast of Africa, he was obliged on one occasion to take part in a skirmish with the natives, and received a terrific wound from an iron bullet, which shattered the jaw and remained imbedded in the bone. The greatest surgeons, such as Ferguson and Nélaton, were unable to extract it, and although he resumed his hunting, from that wound eventually he died.

The present volume must cover a very large proportion of his manifold experiences. The Old Shekarry had a true literary instinct. He handled his pen with the same adroitness as his Westley-Richards. When treating of any hunting subject his method is to group around it whatever he could derive from reading, observation, and experience. But there is not a single creature of earth, air, or water delineated in these pages which he had not followed as game. There

* *Sports in Many Lands*. By H. A. L., 'the Old Shekarry.' (Chapman & Hall.)

is hardly an adventure in which he had not borne a most conspicuous part. Intending sportsmen cannot fail to gather many valuable hints from his pages. There is genuine thoroughness in all he does. He seems to have ranged every part of the known world in quest of sport. We own to a decided preference for lions, tigers, bears, and pumas, and are not disappointed. There is a real vein of instruction running throughout the narratives of peril and prowess. The Major was probably most at home in Indian sport, but his narratives about lions and elephants in South Africa are most thrilling. His changes of travel are most striking. He is in Asia Minor, in Circassia, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, where, however, he does not appear to have a glimmering of what has been done by explorers and biblical students. Then he is in the far West and in Canada, hunting the grizzly and having adventures with Indians. To all boys and to all men who retain anything of the boyish spirit, the volumes will prove very fascinating. They show that their author was every inch a gentleman and a sportsman, with tastes very far remote from those of Hurlingham and battue sport. They form a memorial of an intrepid and ill-fated man who with his friend Jules Gerard and Sir John Harris take rank amongst the mightiest hunters of our day. We hope Edward Freeman, as Mr. Tennyson calls him, will study the work.

We have seen few volumes of industrial biography which have impressed us more favourably than the mixed biography and autobiography just issued of Sir William Fairbairn.* The study of the book will be absolutely necessary for

* *The Life of Sir William Fairbairn, Bart.* Partly written by Himself. Edited and completed by William Pole, F.R.S. (Longmans.)

those who would understand the development of the material prosperity of the great Victorian era. The book is to a great degree a scientific biography, as might be expected from the scientific rank of its part editor, part writer, Mr. Pole. But the general reader will not be deterred by this circumstance from seeking to do justice to a career marked by genius, endurance, and intrepidity. Of all forms of literature autobiography is the most valuable when it is written in a simple, manly, unaffected way. Such books give us the real drama of life, and have a moral value of their own. Men of science have been somewhat prone to autobiography; we have various volumes of their own memoirs, and they set forth their discoveries in simple vivid language peculiarly their own. The autobiography of 'William Fairbairn of Manchester,' for by this name he will always be best known, is just the kind of book which we should have expected. He really was the man whom we have always considered an apocryphal being, who came up to London with half-a-crown in his pocket, or something of the sort. He really was reduced to pretty nearly his last penny. He really went without proper nourishment for a fortnight because he could not afford to get it. And the man became a millionaire and a baronet, and various members of his family were either knighted or refused knighthood. The late Lord Derby wrote and congratulated him on his title, and regretted that his own Ministry had not had the credit of offering him this well-earned distinction, which shed lustre on the order. As a story of scientific progress and material success, there is nothing like it in such memoirs as those by Franklin and Rennie. This seems to have been the kind of success which Fairbairn and his

friends were most likely to appreciate. His name was widely known beyond his own profession, beyond his own country; and his numerous writings, marked by vigour, accuracy, and genius, have been truly admirable additions to the literature of science.

The main story of his early struggles is told by Sir William Fairbairn himself. His biographer has the more pleasing employment of estimating his achievements, and counting up his honours and rewards. He may deservedly take rank as one of the greatest, and certainly the most versatile, of engineers. He had an inborn genius for mechanics, which he strengthened by all possible processes of reflection and experiment. It is not chiefly by his industrial achievements, which included among other items a thousand railway bridges, that his work is to be estimated. He struck out paths of original invention and adaptation, and his life was fertile in promoting great works and original ideas among others. Mr. Pole says: 'Steam-engines, water-wheels, mill-work, and machinery of all kinds; steam-navigation, the iron and steel manufactures, iron defences, iron bridges, and other large structures in iron; locomotives; and in fact almost every kind of subject embraced in the mechanical branch of the profession, occupied his attention; and almost everything that he touched received some improvement at his hands.' We had noted various passages illustrative of this rapid summary; but we exhort our readers to refer for themselves to these pleasant and profitable volumes. We must limit ourselves to noticing one or two points which have an affinity for present days. When his boiler-makers struck at a most unpropitious time for employers, Fairbairn invented his famous riveting machine, which en-

abled him to dispense with their services, and proved of the greatest utility in engineering manufacture. He had an idea, which has never been properly worked out, of cooling the air in the high temperature of tropical climates, which might save multitudes of European lives in India. We hope Lord Lytton will take it up. The concluding chapter, on his 'Personal Character,' will be found very interesting reading.

*A Book on Building,** by Sir Edmund Beckett, Bart., is one of those sound practical manuals which the publishers are making their 'specialty.' Sir Edmund has brought to bear on his hobby all his versatile culture, clear common sense, and varied experience. The result is at once amazing and valuable. It is a book which every man who thinks of building a house or even altering one should possess. As the author remarks,

'Considering the number of persons who at least once in their lives purchase some experience in building, it seems odd that none of them have thought of imparting any of it to their fellow-creatures, with the benevolent object of saving them from falling into the same mistakes and meeting with the same disappointments. I do not mean to ignore the existence of several useful books on house-building by professional architects, nor the multitude of treatises, both by amateur and professional architects, containing theories and histories of architecture, and the writers' views regarding it artistically. Some of these are very good in their way, but it happens not to be the way of giving practical information how to avoid legal or structural mistakes. Nor can professional architects be expected to look at such questions in the same light as those who employ them; for they have in fact opposite interests in some of the questions which arise. And so it has come to pass that men who would not make a contract for buying or leasing a house worth 1000*l.* without legal advice constantly involve themselves in building contracts to an unlimited amount, without any security for getting what they want, or for having the smallest control over the work in either its nature or its cost, or any remedy

* *A Book on Building.* By Sir Edmund Beckett, Bart. (Crosby Lockwood & Co.)

if it is done as ill as possible. Even if a lawyer is consulted about the contract he is as likely as not to omit the requisite provisions, unless he has himself learnt the necessity of them by experience. I have actually known a right form of contract turned back into a wrong one by a solicitor who evidently knew nothing about building and its usual consequences.

And if the requisite information on these matters is to be given by anybody it can only be by some one who has had more than ordinary experience in building, with more than ordinary taste for mechanical details, which are generally less attractive to amateurs than the artistic or theoretical side of architecture. I happen to be in that position; for I can remember no time when I had not a taste for the practical operations of building, long before I had any idea of architecture. Afterwards, from one cause or another, I have been building, either for other people or myself, for about a quarter of a century, and that not merely in the ordinary sense of employing architects and leaving them to do as they like, but designing and looking after the execution of the work, and altogether exercising much more control over it than employers generally do.'

The various sections treat of agreements with architects and builders, principles of construction, house-building, plans and masonry, carpentry and fittings, church-building, &c.

Shirley Hibberd's *Garden Oracle*,* now in its nineteenth year, is a fresh, cheap little book, of service to every one who owns a suburban garden and tries his hand at cultivating flowers, fruits, or vegetables.

* *The Garden Oracle*. By Shirley Hibberd. (W. H. & L. Collingridge.)

The short notices appended to each month, such as 'How to sow Garden-Seeds,' 'How to make and keep Grass Lawns,' 'How to enjoy Geraniums in Winter,' &c., contain a great deal of practical information, clearly and compactly put together by a veteran gardener.

A NEW GAME.

Messrs. Thomas De La Rue & Co. have brought out in a neat form Go-Bang, a Japanese game for two or more persons with board and counters, arranged on a new principle, and pocket-guide by 'Cavendish.'

This game of Go-Bang or Goban, it appears, is of Japanese origin, and was imported into England by some gentlemen travelling in Japan in the summer of 1873.

The implements are a board divided into 324 squares, and a supply of counters of two colours. The little guide clearly explains the mode of playing the game, which affords considerable scope for strategical ability.

There is the Japanese game, the English game, and also three and four-handed Go-Bang, which is an amusing game if played in consultation.

Altogether this is a very interesting and pleasant addition to our evening amusements.

THE TWO ARTISTS.

'EDITH is fair,' the painter said ;
'Her cheek so richly glows,
My palette ne'er could match the red
Of that pure damask rose.

Perchance the evening raindrops light,
Soft sprinkling from above,
Have caught the sunset's colour bright,
And borne it to my love.

In distant regions I must seek
For tints before unknown,
Ere I can paint the brilliant cheek
That blooms for me alone.'

All this his little sister heard,
Who frolicked by his side ;
To check such theories absurd
That gay young sprite replied,

'O, I can tell you where to get
That pretty crimson bloom ;
For well I know where it is set
In Cousin Edith's room.

I'm sure that I could find the place,
If you want some to keep ;
I watch'd her put it on her face—
She didn't see me peep.

So nicely she laid on the pink,
As well as *you* could do ;
And really I almost think
She is an artist too.'

The madden'd painter tore his hair,
And vow'd he ne'er would wed ;
And never since to maiden fair
A tender word has said.

Bright rosy cheeks and skin of pearl
He knows a shower may spoil ;
And when he wants a blooming girl
Paints one himself in oil.

THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.

CHAPTER X.

MADAME D'YVES.

ONE of Mdlle. Marie's fancies at this time was to learn water-colour drawing, and though she had no more taste or talent for it than most of those girls who learn it at English boarding-schools, she got on very satisfactorily by the same means—the powerful assistance of her master. Frank had her pencil in his hand most of the time, and talked Ruskin and other authorities, who seemed to lead on by easy paths to all sorts of wide subjects that his pupil had never dreamt of before. Marie must have felt, though she never confessed it to herself, that she had been living in a very narrow world. Now and then, perhaps, she felt a little frightened, and not sure about the orthodoxy of all these ideas; but then Frank never said a word to which her religion could really object. He was a good, honest, noble-minded Englishman, the cleverest and most charming man she had ever met, and her own cousin. If he was not to be trusted, who in the world was? As if he was ever likely to say a word to offend her! He was too true a gentleman for that. And if he was not very happy—for he had confessed as much—was it not her duty to be as kind to him as she possibly could, and to show him that a Frenchwoman had a heart, and could feel for her friends, whether she knew the history of their troubles or not? It was true that his manner was a very little demonstrative some-

times, that he seemed to forget for a moment who they both were, and looked and spoke as if she belonged to him; but that was because he was English. In England cousins were like brothers and sisters, and young unmarried women were not obliged to be so strict and careful in their manners, and were even allowed to go about alone. All this was firmly established in Marie's poor little mind. And yet, if she had been wise, she would have paid rather more attention to those doubts that came to shake her now and then—those slight pricks of conscience, that growing habit of setting the future out of sight and enjoying the present moment, without a thought of anything beyond.

They had a delightful drive to Carillon that afternoon; the good horses drew them swiftly along the fine even road, and Marie's neighbour showed her all sorts of things that she had never noticed before—birds, insects, the shaking of the poplar leaves, the reflections in the river as they drove along beside it.

'Why, Frank, you are a naturalist,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'O, no,' said Frank; 'but I think it is good for one to keep one's eyes open, and notice all these little things.'

'You are quite right, it is very good indeed, and so I have often told Marie.'

The first streets of the little town were wide, with low white houses, and trees planted in rows, a praiseworthy attempt at boule-

wards. Farther on they came into narrow streets and pavement. Auguste dashed and rattled round the many corners with a glorious carelessness as to what might be in the way. At last he drew up in the market-place, in front of the Hôtel du Faisan, and here they all got out.

'Mes amis,' said the Comtesse, 'I have some shopping to do, and a few little visits to make that would not interest you. The church is very ancient. You like antiquities, Agnes, and you too, Frank. You can go there with Marie, while I attend to my own business. We will wait for each other in the Place.'

'Yes, grandmother,' said Marie. 'And if there is time we can walk down to the river, and look at the château from a distance.'

'Certainly, my dear child.'

'The river is the farthest off, so we will go there first,' said Marie, as Mme. de Saint-Hilaire walked away with her firm step along the uneven pavement. 'We must go down this street, which leads to the outside of the town.'

They made their way through several narrow streets and lanes, which were all fairly clean. Perhaps very dirty little French towns are gradually becoming things of the past.

'This is the shortest way to the river,' said Marie, stopping where a lane went diving down between two high walls, with a gleam of water just caught by a sunbeam at the end. 'And this alley of poplars on the left leads to the château. Which do you like best?'

'Why, the château must be well worth seeing,' said Frank, going forward a few steps between the trees. 'I can see it, a quaint old place standing right in the river. This way, please, unless you prefer the other.'

'Not at all,' said Marie, smiling. 'And Agnes is of your opinion, for she is trying to make herself as tall as you, that she may catch sight of the same view. It is impossible, my dear; you must have patience. A little farther down you will see very well.'

She walked on with her cousins, but stopped, apparently without any reason, some little way before they reached the château. They had a very good view of it, however. A mass of old gray towers, turrets, and roofs, with rugged walls going down apparently straight into the river—the same that flowed by Rochemar, which spread itself out here into a broad, shallow, fast-flowing stream. A smaller stream ran all round the château, crossed by a drawbridge with its old beams and chains. Facing this bridge and the poplar avenue were two great machicolated round towers with pointed tops, a gateway between them, with great gates closed, and a little low door standing open by the side. Some of the windows were modernised, and full of flowers tumbling out upon the graystone ledges. On the land side there was a bright garden fenced with tall iron railings, and all the specks of colour, the varied roofs and tourelles, were lighted up to brilliant clearness by the sun that danced and flashed on the hurrying river beyond.

'Marie, how is it that you have not shown us this before?' said Frank. 'It is the most picturesque thing I have seen yet.'

He set off walking rather quickly down the avenue.

'Don't you think we shall have time to go any farther?' said Agnes, seeing that Marie lingered, and was not inclined to walk on.

'Yes, plenty of time. But we don't know the people who live here, and you understand that I

don't want to be seen wandering about the château.'

'Shall I call Frank back and tell him?'

'No, no. Allons, you would like to see it too. It is very curious. Let us walk down as far as the bridge, and ask those women if the people are at home.'

Two women were washing in the river just below the draw-bridge, beating the clothes on stones. Marie and her cousin went forward and looked over the railings. Frank was standing on the bridge, and had already pulled out his sketch-book.

'Ma bonne femme,' said Marie, in a low clear voice, as the beating ceased, and one of the women turned round to look at her, 'can you tell me if Mme. d'Yves is at home?'

'Mais oui, mademoiselle. Here is madame herself.'

'Ah, que je suis tracassée!' said Marie, between her teeth.

It was too late to run away, for a lady had come out of the garden behind, and was almost close to them. She was a small person, fashionably dressed, with a brown face and very black eyes, and a fanciful wreath of flowers round her hat. As she advanced upon the bridge Frank moved to one side, and took his hat off. Mme. d'Yves turned towards Marie, and made her a low curtsy, which Mdle. de Saint-Hilaire returned with one still more ceremonious.

'I must ask your pardon, madame,' said she, 'for approaching so near the château. My friends are strangers, and they thought it so curious and so beautiful that I was anxious to give them a nearer view. I am afraid we are intruding upon you.'

'Du tout, mademoiselle,' answered the châtelaine, in a rather harsh voice, and with a peculiar

accent. 'I am enchanted to see you—and your friends also,' with gracious inclinations to Frank and Agnes. 'Monsieur is an artist? He will do us the honour of making a sketch of the château?'

Frank said he was hoping to carry away a little pencil recollection of it, if madame would kindly give him permission.

'Monsieur, I am charmed. Yes, it is a very curious old place, very interesting—quite belonging to the Middle Ages. Moi, j'adore le moyen âge. You must go round to the other side, monsieur; it is still more picturesque than this. I shall have the pleasure of showing you the way.'

She turned sinilingly round to the ladies, to conduct them in the same direction.

'Thank you very much, madame,' said Marie; 'but my cousin and I are obliged to return to the town. My grandmother is waiting for us. You will find us in the Place,' she added, looking at Frank, 'when you have finished your sketch.'

'But I should have had so much pleasure in showing the inside of the château to mademoiselle votre cousine, if you and she would have done me the honour to wait a moment,' said Mme. d'Yves, raising her eyebrows.

'Merci bien, madame. You are very kind, but we have not time to-day.'

Frank looked in a little astonishment, wondering where all this hurry had suddenly sprung from. Marie seemed disturbed, and Agnes rather disappointed. He supposed this lady was not an acquaintance, at least not a desirable one, but he did not feel inclined to give up his sketch; she could not hurt him. There was another exchange of bows, and the two girls walked away together along the alley of poplars. Mme. d'Yves

conveyed him round, beyond the facing towers, to the side of the château which seemed to hang over the river. There was just room to pass between the water and the foot of the wall, but beyond that the land ran out into a little point, with trees growing on it; and going along this you had a famous view of all the mass of buildings. They made three sides of an irregular square, and looked as if every possessor for the last five or six hundred years had stuck on a turret, or made a door, or knocked out a window, or built a staircase. For the last hundred years or two the owners seemed to have contented themselves with letting in a little more light when they wanted it here and there, for all the building was gray, rugged, moss-grown stone. The square itself was a garden, with high iron railings to fence it off from the river, and full of flowers—dahlias, asters, roses, carnations—growing in picturesque profusion among the dark old walls. Frank was delighted, and expressed his admiration very cordially to Mme. d'Yves, who bowed and smiled and showed her white teeth.

'You will excuse my beginning my sketch at once, madame,' he said. 'This beautiful place deserves hours, and I have only minutes to give to it.'

'There is a charming view from the other side of the river,' suggested Mme. d'Yves. 'You would not have time to cross now, monsieur,' as Frank glanced longingly in that direction. 'But are you making such a very short visit to Les Sapinières that you will not have time to come again?'

Frank might do that, he thought. What did it matter if his aunt was not acquainted with this lady? His doings were quite independent, and did not commit any-

body else. Any one who pretended to be an artist must sometimes go among queer people. He thanked Mme. d'Yves, and said that he was not making a very short visit, and with her kind permission, if he found it possible, he should be very glad to come again.

'Then,' said she, 'if we do not happen to find you out, will you come and announce yourself at the château? My husband will be charmed to show you the interior, and I assure you it is well worth seeing. We have collections too that may interest you—pictures, old china, tapestry, weapons, coins. You may perhaps have heard, monsieur, that our house is called the "Museum of Anjou."'

'No, indeed, madame; I had not heard that,' said Frank.

'Ah, it is very possible. But you will come and see for yourself; n'est-ce pas, monsieur? You promise me that?'

'With very many thanks, madame, for your amiable politeness.'

After this they parted; Mme. d'Yves stepping lightly back to her garden, and Frank settling down to his sketch, which was only a slight one, in view of the better opportunity promised by himself and the kind lady of the château.

He walked back to the inn, and found the horses quite ready, and Mme. de Saint-Hilaire just looking round for him before she got into the carriage. She seemed a little put out as they drove off.

'It was a pity you went near the château, ma chère enfant,' she said to Marie, 'without ascertaining whether those people were at home.'

'It was my fault,' said Frank. 'I was so delighted with the old place that I dragged them down close to it before they knew where they were, and then the lady

sprang out upon us as if she had been lying in wait.'

'Probably she had,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'Who are they? Not people quite of your standing, I suppose?'

'Monsieur d'Yves belongs to a good old Breton family. He was a very wild young man; he spent all his fortune, and made it again in a remarkable way by gaming, racing, speculating—cheating, some people say. At any rate, he managed to leave his respectability behind him. His wife is a bourgeoisie—nobody at all—but she had a certain fortune of her own. I never heard anything absolutely against her, but they are not in society, very much to their disappointment and disgust. Their efforts have been frightful. He bought that old château immediately after his marriage, furnished it, as I heard, with every sort of expensive absurdity, gave himself the title of baron, to which he has no right whatever, and expected to be welcomed and fêted by the whole neighbourhood. A few people did visit them at first. That dear Mme. de Rochemar set the example—she is sometimes too amiable; but nobody could go very far. The gentlemen could not regard M. d'Yves as one of themselves, and the ladies found his wife insupportable. As to me, I never visited them at all; so you can imagine how they hate me.'

'Less, perhaps,' said Frank, 'than those ladies who began and were obliged to leave off. She was politeness itself to Marie just now.'

'Ah, very possible. She thought she had a chance of picking up an acquaintance. She knew very well who Marie was, and all about her. La petite is something of a personage in the neighbourhood now.'

'Could she know, grand'mère?'

said Marie, frowning, and colouring a little.

'My dear child, believe me, there is nothing she does not know. But you are probably right, Frank. She hates Mme. de Rochemar as much as anybody. I wish with all my heart they would go away, for the château is certainly very curious, and I myself should like to see it again.'

'I must try one of these days to make a water-colour sketch of it from a little farther off,' said Frank—'the other side of the river. Mme. d'Yves wished very much to show me the interior. She says they have pictures and all kinds of curiosities; but even without these the old place must be well worth seeing. I thought I might perhaps avail myself of her civility, but if you would prefer my not going there again, you have only to say so.'

'You are very good,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, smiling. 'But there is no reason for you to deny yourself like that. On the contrary, my dear Frank, I should certainly go. A visit from you is not a visit from me—and indeed I really have nothing to say against that poor Mme. d'Yves. I have sometimes thought that she must die of dulness, for they have nothing to say to the bourgeoisie, and must be very much alone all the time they are at Carillon. Go by all means, as soon as you please. You are quite old and sensible enough to take care of yourself.'

'I may not go, I suppose?' said Agnes.

'No, my dear, certainly not,' and 'Of course not,' came simultaneously from her aunt and brother.

'Poor Agnes!' said Marie, laughing. 'But you and I are in the same position. I never have seen the inside of the château, and probably never shall. Frank must

bring us an exact description of it.'

CHAPTER XI.

A SHOOTING-PARTY.

FRANK did not appear to be in any particular hurry to pay his second visit to the Château de Carillon, and there were plenty of other amusements to occupy his thoughts and time. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire had a great many neighbours, and they were inclined to be very hospitable, asking her and her young people to all sorts of entertainments—dinner-parties, dances, theatricals. At these soirées the children often acted charades. At one house the tutor wrote a little play for his pupils, who acted it with immense spirit, chattering, gesticulating, singing their gay songs, and tripping about in the prettiest costumes. M. l'Abbé's play itself was the weakest part of the performance. Another lady gave a musical party, at which a little Parisian artist thundered out Wagner and Chopin in a style to drive the piano and all the listeners crazy.

One day M. de Valmont asked the two young Englishmen to come and shoot with him and some of his friends. This was a very different thing from shooting with the Maire of Sonnay, and Frank was quite ready to go. He and Johnny drove off with Auguste in the dogcart immediately after breakfast. It was a very hot sultry day, with heavy white clouds rising slowly in the south, and thunder growling in the distance now and then. They arrived at Lauron about half-past twelve, and went out at once with the Marquis: his sons had already gone off on their own account. There was plenty of 'gibier à

plume' to be seen, and some 'à poil,' about the wild heathy ground, with its little hills and valleys, and the long slopes leading away to the woods. The gorse was blossoming here and there. They put up birds behind every hedge and thicket of brushwood, and these good shots soon began to fill their game-bags. The friends whom M. de Valmont had mentioned came dropping in one by one—M. de l'Allier, 'les petits de Rochemar,' and others from the neighbourhood—all variously got up for 'chasse à tir.' A very independent amusement this seemed to be. No keeper or game-carrier was to be seen. Each sportsman wore a loose jacket of some strong stuff like linen, in different colours, olive-green, blue, white, or black, with a large bag behind for carrying his game. Each had his own dog, which acted pointer, setter, and retriever. Straw hats were universal, and might be seen bobbing about over hedges and ditches, as their wearers rushed here and there, sometimes together, sometimes apart, with a good deal of noise and boyish fun. All these unorthodox ways did not prevent them from being very good shots. Though the hares and partridges had a better chance for their lives than in the English fashion of shooting made easy, a great many of them went home on the sportsmen's backs to the château. This was at about three o'clock for lunch, after which they turned out again for two hours' more work. The Englishmen did their full share of it all; but the day was so hot, and so much exertion seemed to be wanted, that Frank gave in at last, and followed Johnny's advice, given quite gravely, to pick some of the great mushrooms that grew all about the fields, and take them in to Mme. de Valmont.

The two brothers stayed to dine at Lauron, but the rest of the party started off home about half-past five. Johnny had dined there several times before, and his elder brother once, and they both agreed that it was a delightful house. There was some value in this testimony from Frank, who was unprejudiced and very particular. Mme. de Valmont was one of those attractive hostesses with a talent for making every one feel happy and at home. Her good manners were only the outward expression of her kind heart, and never ran on into the extravagant politeness of some of her neighbours. She was natural—she had seen the world—was a very agreeable and sensible woman, and whatever may have been the history of her marriage, she loved her husband and children cordially, and they adored her. It was delightful to see this family all together. They were mutually polite and gentle, they enjoyed each other's company, made friendly little jokes and pretty speeches, but all without running into any extremes, or making other people feel dropped in their circle. Max and his sister were on the most affectionate terms, and the quieter Pierre was devoted to his mother. Cécile seemed very happy that evening: her mother remarked as much when the gentlemen had left them together in the salon.

'How bright you are to-night, my child!' said Mme. de Valmont, laying her hands on Cécile's shoulders and looking fondly into her face. She always seemed to see her own youth again there. They were very like each other, as Johnny had remarked when he first set eyes on them coming into the old church. Cécile's, perhaps, was a graver, steadier aspect; her eyes were

deeper and her features more decided than Mme. de Valmont's had been at her age. 'Are not you overwhelmed with the heat?' she went on. 'Moi, j'étouffe! Come, dearest, let us go out and breathe a little air, if there is any.'

She threw a white scarf over her head, and they went down the stone stairs, and out upon the perron in front of the house-door. It was a black night; there was not a star to be seen, but now and then lightning flashed up from the horizon with a sudden trembling radiance; then all was dark again; the thunder growled and rattled, and died away in the distance. They sat down together on the steps, for it seemed too dark to walk about. The country lay in utter stillness; even the owls were silent, and they only heard now and then the cry of some wild thing far away in the woods. It was a night for wild beasts or ghosts or anything uncanny, but Mme. de Valmont and her daughter rather enjoyed it as they sat and talked in a low voice, and lifted their faces to catch the breath of air that sometimes came stealing up the valley.

'I think we shall have a storm to-night,' said the Marquise, 'and our friends will have some trouble in getting home. Certainly they are very agreeable young men, and I shall be sorry when they return to England.'

'Do you like the elder, mamma?'

'Not so much as our friend John. What do you say?'

'I detest him.'

'Ma chère amie! And why?'

'Mais—I cannot tell you indeed. Do not you sometimes dislike a person without knowing why?'

'I think I can generally find a reason if I look for it,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'However, I do not myself think M. Frank so charm-

ing. Yet one ought to believe his friends. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire says he is perfect, and there are many others who agree with her.'

'Mamma,' said Cécile, 'I don't know—' and then she made a long pause.

'Allons, that is news!' said Mme. de Valmont, laughing a little. 'But I assure you he is very popular. I have heard many people praise him, especially Mme. de Rochemar; and not only the old ladies—his cousin Marie thinks him a hero, does she not?'

'Yes, I suppose she does. That is why I detest him.'

'What a droll reason! Because Marie likes him you detest him. My dear Cécile, you must tell me what you mean.'

It was dark, but Mme. de Valmont felt instinctively that her daughter was blushing and confused. She was a little anxious, but quite determined to get to the bottom of this. Her long knowledge of Cécile told her that it was probably all right, and she need not alarm herself at all.

'Allons, mon amie,' she said, with a shade of peremptoriness in her tone. 'You must hide nothing, but tell me your thoughts without any reserve whatever.'

'Well, mamma, I think he tries to make Marie like him. I have noticed it several times. It does not make her happy, for she looks quite sad and thin—have you noticed that? But she does like him very much, and he is always following her about; and, mamma—do not say anything, je vous en prie—but when we were talking on the terrace at Rochemar that night, when we saw him first, she did not seem very anxious for M. de Rochemar to come back; and then M. Frank came to us, and began to talk in a voice and a way I did not like, and I went straight into the sa-

lon. They came at once, you know—that was just before they began to sing.'

'The English, you know, have different ideas,' said Mme. de Valmont; 'and English girls are allowed all kinds of freedom that you and Marie have not.'

'I know that, mamma. But even in England, if a girl was engaged, I do not think any one else would speak and look as Marie's cousin does.'

'Perhaps not,' said Mme. de Valmont, who in her secret heart was delighted with her daughter's sentiments. 'But Englishmen, you know, think that unmarried girls are to have the same attention as married women. You can see that in our friend Johnny, who is always so polite to you.'

'As to that, mamma,' said Cécile, 'I think it is you who have all his politeness.'

'Well, that is as it should be,' said her mother rather hastily. 'Johnny has right feelings and good principles.'

'And his brother has neither one nor the other. But, seriously, is it not sad for Marie? One cannot do anything—one cannot speak, or she will be angry.'

'I think it possible that Marie is very wrong. But of course we cannot interfere. Poor M. de Rochemar!'

'I do not know who to pity most,' said Cécile gravely. 'Promise me one thing, chère petite maman—that you will never marry me to any one I do not choose for myself.'

'I promise. But you must promise me something in return—that you will never insist on marrying an unsuitable person.'

'Are you there, madame?' said a low gentle voice at the door; and Johnny Wyatt came out and joined them, placing himself a little lower down on the steps.

'What a night it is—as hot as a furnace! I believe there is an awful storm coming up.'

'Yes, that last peal of thunder was a good deal nearer,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'Where are you come from? Are the others gone into the salon?'

'No,' said Johnny. 'M. de Valmont and my brother are playing billiards, and the others are watching them. So was I, till I got tired of it.'

'So you came to give us your company. That was very amiable of you. Cécile and I have drifted into such a gloomy conversation that we shall be quite glad of a little cheering.'

'Have you really? I did not know you were ever subject to bad spirits.'

'Not exactly that, perhaps. But a prospect does not always look the same, does it? The future is like others—sometimes bright and sometimes cloudy.'

'Well, I am subject to very bad spirits,' said Johnny, 'and it is odd enough that I should have been thinking just now about the future—what a dreadful thing it is, and all that. Madame, do you know that in another month we shall be back in England, and in a few weeks I shall be afloat again, and most likely I shall never see you and—Lauron again?'

'So you are in very bad spirits,' said Mme. de Valmont, after a moment's pause.

'Next door to wretched.'

'Dear M. Johnny, I do not see why you should not expect to see Lauron again. We do not forget our friends so easily, even when we owe them nothing—and we owe you a great deal.'

She leaned forward and held out her hand to Johnny, who could just see it, though hardly her face, in the darkness, and he

took it and kissed it very devoutly. Mdlle. Cécile sat quite silent during these flirtations with her mother. One knows something of the feeling that was tugging at Johnny's heart—the prospect of parting with companions one has learnt to love, and the longing wish not to be forgotten; to leave a little trace of oneself in the thoughts and words of those whose hands now touch and whose eyes now meet one's own.

'You are very kind,' he said, 'but it would be a different thing if you were in England. It is so seldom that I have time, you see, to go anywhere but home.'

'You will have to find time now,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'Remember, you must not wait for your aunt to ask you, but you must write to me when you have a few weeks to spare, and we shall always be so happy to receive you. Now do not forget that.'

'I am not likely to forget it, madame,' said Johnny.

'Tell us something about your home,' the Marquise went on. 'Have you any sisters besides Mdlle. Agnes?'

'Not now. We had another, but she died three years ago.'

'Was she married?'

'Yes, she had been married a year.'

'Ah, how sad,' murmured Cécile, under her breath.

'Yes,' said Johnny, whose tongue seemed to be unloosed by the darkness, 'I was sorry for little Katie. She was engaged for five years. It was such a long time to wait, and then to die in a year.'

'But what was the reason for waiting so long?' said Mme. de Valmont.

'O, because he was poor. They couldn't afford to marry till he got something to do—at least

people thought they could not. I told him that in his place I should have made Katie marry me at once, and let the future take care of itself. It's all right, I think, when people struggle up together; and Katie would have done very well, though he didn't think she was fit for it. But I believe I knew her best.'

'Was she younger than you?'

'We were twins, and she was one of the prettiest and cleverest girls you ever saw.'

'And your parents allowed her to wait all that time for the chance,' said Mme. de Valmont, half to herself.

'What should they have done?' said Johnny. 'Of course she could not have married any one else.'

'I knew an English lady once, who told me that in England people were always breaking off their engagements, and making new ones.'

'Some people may. Do you think it right or wrong?'

'Well, wrong,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'I do not think that we French are right in some of our customs; our marriages, for instance, are sometimes sad enough. But I will say this: it is very difficult to win the real affection of a Frenchwoman, but when she gives it once it is for ever.'

'But then, I suppose,' said Johnny doubtfully, 'a Frenchwoman often marries without any affection at all.'

'Often,' Mme. de Valmont calmly assented. 'Then duty and honour take its place. But if the affection happens to be there, tant mieux.'

'I should be afraid,' said Johnny slowly, 'that it might be rather bad if after one was married one met the right person. What would a French lady do then?'

'There come in duty and honour,' said Mme. de Valmont.

'Ah, that's all very well. They are grand things, but they don't always keep you from being very unhappy. I think it is better not to risk it, and to find out the right person to begin with.'

'That is all very well too. But could a mother allow her daughter to throw herself away on a person perhaps without money or connections or advantages of any kind, merely because the demoiselle made up her mind that here was the right person? Jamais, jamais!' and Mme. de Valmont shook her head emphatically.

'Well, dear madame, you are right, no doubt,' said the sailor. 'However, I hope no one will ever take the trouble to make a match for me. If I loved a girl!—O, what a mercy that it was a dark night!—'I am afraid I should tell her so, without stopping to think about money or connections—at least, perhaps under some circumstances I might not.'

'Under what circumstances?' said Mme. de Valmont, with a little laugh. 'Now you must tell us, for we are both dying with curiosity.'

'O, well,' said Johnny, hesitating, 'if I had any reason for thinking that the thing was quite hopeless, and that my mentioning it would make her unhappy.'

'Those are very good sentiments. And what would make it hopeless in your eyes, may I ask?'

'Her being engaged to some one else.'

'Only that?'

'Only that. Nothing else at all.'

'Ah, how you amuse me!' said Mme. de Valmont, laughing again. 'Cécile, now that we have heard our friend's confessions, we must unite in wishing him success

with the pretty young English lady who is to be so fortunate.'

'Perhaps she will not be English, mamma. Who knows?'

'Not English! Indeed, yes. What are you dreaming of, my child? Do you expect M. Wyatt to bring home some pretty savage from his voyages? That would hardly be the way to secure the happiness he thinks of so much. No, it is always best to marry in one's own country.'

Mme. de Valmont got up, for a warning voice told her that Johnny's explanations had gone far enough.

'Let us go back into the salon,' she said. 'Ces messieurs must have finished their billiards by this time. Come, Cécile.'

There were more reasons than one for going in. The night had been growing blacker and blacker, and now the first flash of real forked lightning darted across the sky, and was followed by a peal of thunder that seemed almost to shake the solid foundations of the old château. This was only the beginning of a storm that lasted late into the night, with torrents of rain, a howling wind that woke suddenly and rose higher and higher, so that all the elements seemed to be raging and crashing and fighting together on the old battle-plain of Anjou.

'Don't you wish you were on board ship?' said Frank Wyatt to his brother.

'Yes,' said Johnny. 'I never feel safe in a storm on land. It is dreadful to be shut up in a house that may tumble down any minute.'

He appealed to M. de Valmont, who was quite able to agree with him from his early recollections, and these two old salts set to work to abuse houses, their roofs, walls, windows, &c., while Mme. de Valmont was holding a

little consultation with Frank, and sending out to tell Auguste that the weather was far too bad for any thoughts of returning to Les Sapinières that night.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MILL-STREAM.

JOHNNY lay awake that night in his quaint tapestried room, and thought philosophically how unfortunate it was that a fellow never could help falling in love with the wrong person—wrong, at least, in a worldly and sensible view.

'What one can't have one is sure to want,' he thought rather disconsolately. 'And I too, who have kept so much out of that sort of thing!'

His brother officers, most of them, had locks of hair enough to stock a barber's shop, but he had always been wise enough to stop short of these extremes. He was very friendly, very amiable, kind and polite to his lady acquaintance, but the friendliness was so general as to mean nothing in particular; and to tell the truth, Johnny, with all his absent laziness and *laissez-faire* disposition, was almost insanely fanciful about ladies. In his sailor's wide experience he had never seen one who came up to his ideal of perfection till at last he met her walking into the church of Notre Dame at Le Mans—tall, beautiful, dignified, yet a thoroughly simple girl; a Frenchwoman and a Roman Catholic, yet without frivolity and without narrowness; generous, gentle, single-minded, pure as her white dress that glimmered in the darkness as she sat like a wraith on the steps, and listened silently to all that her mother and he said to each other.

Johnny felt that his brother Frank was quite right, though he had been curiously angry with him at the time, when he said those unpalatable things.

It would never occur to Cécile, or to her mother, that he could have the presumption to be in love with her. The Great Mogul would be much more likely. There was a gulf between them, and, in fact, he might as well be her grandfather.

'And of course that is the reason why madame is so kind, and treats me like a son of her own,' thought Johnny. 'I am not dangerous. My teeth and claws are well filed, and certainly I can never interfere with Mdlle. Cécile's prospects. It's quite light, and what a splendid morning! I'll get up and look about the place.'

It was a brilliant morning; the sky was cloudless and the air delightfully fresh. The storm had left traces behind it in earth torn up into water-courses, and boughs and twigs scattered from the trees, and little streams trickling, and pools lying here and there in hollow places; but Lauron looked more beautiful and majestic than ever, as Johnny prowled about at the foot of the old towers, under the beeches, down the untidy road that led to the old gateway of the yard. Then he turned towards the village, and had strolled a little way in that direction when he suddenly met the two ladies coming back from mass.

'Good-morning,' said Mme. de Valmont, putting out her hand with a smile; 'are you so early at Les Sapinières? I thought Mme. de Saint-Hilaire was the only person there who ever woke in the morning.'

'No, I am not often so early,' Johnny confessed, 'though I am

not quite so bad as some people. But are you always out at this hour, madame?

'Cécile and I are generally out before eight o'clock. Ah, here is the person who always comes to meet us.'

Cécile's favourite pug came racing down the road, and jumping round her in rapture.

'A bas! Be quiet, little one,' said Cécile, looking down lovingly, and taking the ugly face between her hands. 'Must we go in at once, mamma, or may we take this little creature for a walk?'

'Certainly,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'Have you seen our river,' she said to Johnny, 'and the old mill? Ah, let us go there; it is curious, and well worth the trouble.'

'What trouble, madame?' said Johnny.

'The trouble of walking so far,' she answered, smiling; 'you think it should be called a pleasure? Well, let us go.'

They turned back down the shady road, crossed the hilly irregular street of the village a little above the church, and went down across a meadow to the river, which was a fairly deep and rapid stream. They stood on the bank above the water, in whose clear depths shoals of little fish were darting to and fro. To their left were the yellow weather-stained walls and red-tiled roofs of the old mill; the great wheel under its archway went splashing round, and the water came rushing and foaming out into the main stream emerald green and snowy white. From the roof of the damp old archway long tendrils of ivy and wild-rose briars hung down over the wheel, catching the spray, and shaking bright drops down again into the water.

'That would make a picture for Frank,' said Johnny. 'This



JOHNNY PLAYS THE HERO.

See the 'Dreamland of Love,'

1. The first step is to identify the problem. This involves understanding the current situation and what needs to be changed.

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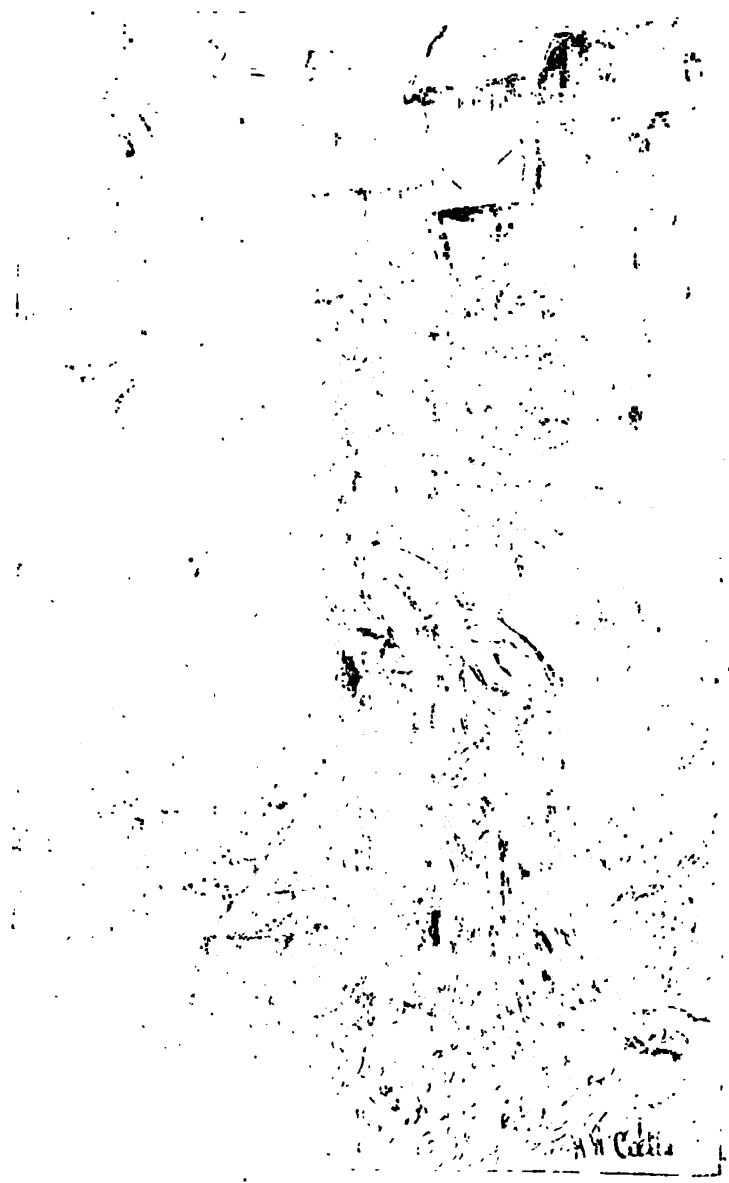
It gave me a great deal of pleasure to see the committee of the Wisconsin College of Education at their meeting at Madison, Wisconsin, on the 11th of the month of April, 1902, and to have the opportunity to discuss with them the various subjects which they were considering, and to see

[illegible]

1. The first step is to identify the key components of the system. This includes understanding the hardware, software, and data involved.

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clear water would be nice for a swim.'

'Are you a good swimmer?' said Mme. de Valmont.

'Pretty good. I have had to swim for my life several times.'

'And for other people's lives too, I daresay,' she said, coming instinctively on the truth; but Johnny did not respond to this.

'I have heard a story,' said Cécile to her mother, 'of a little sailor-boy who fell overboard, and of a young officer who jumped into the sea after him, and dived under the ship after him, and brought him to the surface, and kept him floating there till a boat came to save them both. The water was very deep, and full of sharks. Did you ever hear of that, monsieur? Was it not beautiful?'

Johnny glanced at her and smiled, while the colour deepened in his dark face.

'Somebody has made a great story out of a very little one, mademoiselle,' he said. 'Anyone who could swim would have done the same. It was nothing at all. May I ask who told you?'

'It was Mdlle. Wyatt.'

'I thought so; then you had better not believe anything she tells you.'

'Unless we are sure that it is true,' said Cécile, nodding her head gently.

'Take care, my friend,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'It is you that we shall not believe, if you try to spoil your own reputation.'

'Dear madame, have the goodness to say no more about it,' said Johnny, looking imploringly up.

It gave him a pang of hopelessness to see the bright kind enthusiasm in Cécile's eyes, the colour rising in her clear pale cheeks, all because of that old story of his sailor-life, and then to

feel that he had no right to all this, that she would give the same to any ordinary acquaintance who was carried away for an instant so far as to forget the paramount importance of his own health and strength. Just as if there was any merit in that! He looked down at the flowing water with sad sleepy eyes, which the next moment were wakened to flashing eagerness by a splash, and a cry from Cécile. It was only her little dog, which had contrived to slip into the water, and was now struggling helplessly in the current, drawn every moment nearer to the mill-wheel.

'The little beast will be drowned,' said Johnny, half to himself; and he pulled off his coat and threw it on the grass.

Cécile had run down to the water's edge, and was stretching out eagerly over the stream.

'I can reach him—I can reach him! Ah, no! O, mon petit chien! He will be drowned—he will be under the wheel! Mamma, do you see! Ah, mon Dieu! mon Dieu!'

'Take care, mademoiselle; don't wet your feet,' said Johnny, as he went carefully into the water.

Close to the bank there was a sudden fall, and he was swimming directly.

'Come out, I beg—I entreat of you!' cried Mme. de Valmont. 'You must not risk your life for the sake of a foolish little dog. Ah, Cécile, why did you not stop him? They will both be drowned before our eyes! Ah, it is too late—the current is too strong; he will be drawn under the wheel. There seems to be no one in the mill. Stay! there is the bonhomme Nicole in his yard. I will call him. Help, help!'

The Marquise set off running along the meadow towards the village, while Cécile stood per-

fectly still at the water's edge. The little dog was being washed nearer and nearer to the great splashing wheel; he bobbed up and down helplessly in the green foaming rush. Johnny was struggling with the stream, which was almost too strong for him. Cécile thought it was a long, long time, but in reality it was only a minute or two, before he managed to support himself with one hand against a projecting piece of black damp wall, and then, as the dog was washed past him straight into the dark depths of the archway, to dash out with the other hand and catch him by his poor draggled neck. Then he stopped a moment, clinging to the wall, and holding the rescued creature in his arm.

'Mademoiselle!' he said rather breathlessly.

'Yes, here I am,' said Cécile; and she crept down the slippery bank at the end of the wall, about three yards' distance from the two drowned rats.

'Take care,' said Johnny. 'Could you catch the dog, if I threw him to you? Catch fast hold of the wall with one hand, and lean forward as far as you can. I shall throw him into your right arm.'

'Throw him, please,' said Cécile.

In another moment the poor frightened half-drowned little creature was safe in his mistress's affectionate clasp. Cécile turned round and laid him on the grass, where almost directly he stood tremblingly up and began to shake himself. She went back to his rescuer, who pulled himself along by the wall, and gave him her hand to help him round the corner. He shook himself too, when he was safe on dry land, and was beginning to laugh, but she looked so pale and earnest that he was obliged to pause.

'Mademoiselle,' he said, 'we are neither of us any the worse for it.'

'But you might have been drowned—and in saving a poor little dog. Ah, and it would have been all my fault. What should I have done?'

'There was no danger,' said Johnny. 'But one might easily be drowned in a worse cause. And I rather think it would have been the best thing that could have happened to me.'

'How can you say so?'

'Indeed I mean it. Don't you know why?'

Mdlle. de Valmont must have been an unnaturally stupid girl if she had not understood what Johnny's eyes told her.

'Ah, do not say that, *je vous en prie*,' she said, shaking her head.

'No, I know I must not,' said Johnny. 'If you were English—But even as it is, do you know,' he went on in his quaint way, 'you would not be the first French lady who had—Forgive me. I did not mean to say a single word, only it came out somehow.'

'Ah, *monsieur*,' said Cécile, throwing up her hands, and clasping them together earnestly, 'it is not forgiveness that we owe you. It is a thousand thanks—for—everything.'

The Marquise came hurrying back with several villagers, angry with herself for having left her daughter alone—a curious piece of forgetfulness on her part—yet who could suspect Johnny in his dripping condition of making love? So all she did was to make a greater hero of him than ever, while he felt ashamed of himself, and could not bear to hear the praises that he really felt he did not deserve. He escaped as soon as possible from the admiration

of the peasants and from Mme. de Valmont's thanks, and set off at a hard run towards the château, while the ladies and the rescued pug followed more slowly.

When they arrived they found the dogcart at the door, and Frank quite ready to start, and not at all willing to wait till his brother's clothes were dry. He thought Mme. de Saint-Hilaire would certainly expect them back in time for breakfast.

'Then listen to my advice,' said M. de Valmont. 'Go yourself, if you must, and leave our friend Johnny in our care. I am going to drive to Carillon this afternoon, and I will bring him home.'

Frank thanked him, and after many ceremonious farewells jumped into the cart and drove off.

Johnny hardly knew whether to be sorry or glad when he came down-stairs in a suit of Max de Valmont's shooting-clothes, and found himself left to spend some more hours at Lauron. It was one of those dangerous pleasures that one feels safer and better without, and yet it is simply impossible to turn one's back upon them and walk away. He knew, but hardly realised yet, that Cécile was not angry with him for what he had told her. If she had shown a sign of vexation, of dislike, or even extreme astonishment, the affair would have been simplified; there would have been nothing for it but to hold his tongue in future, and repent of his foolishness in speaking at all. As it was, she only seemed to sigh a little over the impossibility of his daring dream. Did not that regret of hers remove half the impossibility? Johnny let himself think so for a moment, and then brought himself back to reality with a sudden wrench. He had no business to have spoken to her

at all. She had checked him kindly, sweetly, like a noble girl as she was. She liked him as a friend, and had some ideas of gratitude in her head, and did not want him to throw away the friendship he enjoyed now by talking wild nonsense that might be addressed to some English miss, but was most unsuitable and ridiculous when spoken by a poor sailor to a daughter of the old noblesse of France. Having placed himself on this cold level of fact, Johnny refused to remember that after all she had not been angry, that she had blushed sweetly when he said those few foolish words, and that perhaps some deeper feeling still was lurking under the regretful sadness of her soft brown eyes. These fancies would keep thrusting themselves up through stern hard conviction, like wild flowers in rocky ground.

The post came to Lauron a little after twelve. Breakfast was just over, and the young men went off to visit the horses, while M. and Mme. de Valmont disappeared into the library with their letters.

Presently Cécile's voice came calling across the old courtyard.

'Max, es-tu là? Papa wants you in the library.'

The Marquis and Marquise were sitting in two arm-chairs, with their letters between them on a little inlaid table.

'My children,' said Mme. de Valmont, 'here are three interesting letters—two for your father and one for me. Allons, yours first,' she said to her husband.

'One of mine is not very pleasant,' said M. de Valmont. 'Our friends Moreau et Cie. have got into some trouble. They have been cheated of 200,000 francs by some Republican rascal who has run off to South America, just when they especially wanted the

money for the new ironclad. In consequence of this, they want me to advance another 100,000 to help them out of the present difficulty. I shall have good interest, and when their new dock is made all the shares will rise in value enormously. What do you say, Max?

'Are we rich enough to venture money like that?' inquired Max prudently.

'I think so,' said M. de Valmont. 'And you at least have a chance of being rich, if you are wise. I have here a letter from my old friend the Vicomte de Pontmercy. He invites me and my sons, and any friends I choose to bring, to shoot with him for a week on his estate near Vitré, two or three weeks hence. Pierre will be gone back to his tutor, but it seems to me that we may as well take our dear friend Johnny Wyatt. Then he and I might go on to Brest and pay a visit to M. Moreau, and show our Englishman something of the French navy, while M. Max de Valmont makes himself agreeable at Pontmercy.'

'Mlle. Stéphanie de Pontmercy is very pretty, very gentille,' said Mme. de Valmont, nodding and smiling at Max. 'Her dot will be large. Monsieur son père is one of the richest men in Brittany. He invites you to his house, Max, and says that it would be a happiness to him to be allied with us.'

'If we like each other,' said Max considerably. 'I will never marry a woman who cannot be my friend, as Cécile is,' with a bow to his sister, who laid her hand caressingly on his shoulder.

'Very well, my little Max; that is quite as it should be,' said his mother amiably.

'Ma mère,' said Max, 'no one need wish to be happier than you

and my father. But I will not be satisfied with less. I shall be charmed to shoot with M. de Pontmercy, and to visit him at his château; and if M. Wyatt will go with us, tant mieux.'

M. de Valmont nodded and pulled his moustache, and seemed quite contented. Having settled his son's business, he then looked at Cécile, and pointed to the nearest chair.

'Sit down, my child. We have now something to propose to you.'

Cécile obeyed in silence; and Max, not being told to go away, stood with his arm on the back of her chair.

'Your mother has had a proposal for you from M. Jules de Marillac,' said the Marquis. 'The letter is from his uncle the Comte de Marillac, and is forwarded by Mme. d'Altain, who knows the young man, and has written before to your mother on the subject. Give her the letter,' he said to his wife. 'Nothing could be more courteous, more generous, or more deserving of a favourable answer. Read that, my dear Cécile. I flatter myself that you will find no room for objection.'

Cécile glanced up at her mother as she took the letter from her hand. She had seen such letters before, and had an instinctive horror of them: the very slight dash of sentiment they contained was a thin veil for the business arrangements so carefully set forth, showing the advantages to be obtained on both sides through such a match. During these last weeks a revulsion had set in against these things in Cécile's mind. Not that she had any good reason to give, but she had been so thankful just lately not to be in Marie de Saint-Hilaire's position—engaged to a man whom she regarded with indifference. Then there was all

that Johnny had said last night, when he and her mother were talking of French marriages, and those few words that he let fall this morning. Ah, and there was her mother's promise too. That would certainly save her from being bound to M. de Marillac.

She held the letter in slight careless fingers, and glanced through it under her drooping eyelids—the old Comte's grand set speeches, her own beauty and perfection, the high qualities of his nephew, his wealth and position, the absolute devotion that he offered to the unknown lady to whom he ventured to propose himself. Cécile stretched out her hand to put the letter on the table, but not quite far enough; it rustled to her feet, and Max came round and picked it up silently.

M. de Valmont, who expected his daughter to be blushing and smiling with pleasure, gazed at her in some astonishment.

'Well, my child, what do you think of it?' said Mme. de Valmont.

'I am too young,' said Cécile.

'Too young!' repeated the Marquis. 'Your mother was married at seventeen.'

'Cécile is still a child at heart, and loves her home,' said Mme. de Valmont gently. 'I have felt that, and so I said nothing to her, and gave no positive answer when my aunt wrote to me before on the same subject. But now, you see, M. de Marillac is anxious for some decision. Certainly, ma petite, most girls would be thankful for such an offer. What shall we say to him?'

'Pardon, ma mère,' put in Max, as his sister seemed for the moment unable to speak; 'they will surely be allowed to see each other before any positive answer is given.'

'Sans doute, mon pauvre ami.

M. de Marillac would wish the same. We must leave it to be decided by an interview between the young people themselves, as soon as we go to Paris. In the mean time we must write a most amiable letter.'

'Yes, that must be it,' assented M. de Valmont.

Cécile got up suddenly, fixing her eyes on her mother with an expression of earnest entreaty.

'Maman, would it not be better to say no at once?'

'Ma chère, how can you possibly tell whether you like or dislike the gentleman without ever having seen him?'

'I know I shall dislike him,' said Cécile.

'Come, mademoiselle, that is too much,' said her father, laughing, and getting up rather impatiently. 'One listens to reason, but not to prejudice. Max might as well refuse to go to Pontmercy, having made up his mind that the charming Mdle. Stéphanie was ugly and detestable. Allons, ma petite, you are young indeed, but too old for such childishness as this. Be at your ease: you shall see him, and if he turns out to be odious there is an end of it.'

Just at this moment Pierre and Johnny appeared at the other end of the room with rods in their hands.

'Max! Cécile!' cried Pierre, 'we are going fishing. Will you come?'

'Let there be no more jumping into the river, I beg of you,' said Mme. de Valmont, going forward.

The interruption was like a breath of fresh air, and revived Cécile at once. She turned smiling to her father, and said a few words in a low voice; on which M. de Valmont immediately took her in his arms and kissed her on both cheeks.

Johnny saw no more of her that day, for she went away with her mother, and did not join the fishing-party.

He spent two or three pleasant lazy hours with the two young fellows by the river, and then drove off with the Marquis in his dogcart to Les Sapinières. On

the road M. de Valmont detailed his Brittany scheme, which Johnny of course entered into with joy and gratitude. If in the natural way of things he could not spend all his time with Cécile, the best alternative was to spend as much as possible with her relations.

(To be continued.)

WINTER RESORTS OF LONDON SOCIETY.

SICILIAN RESORTS—MALTA.

THERE are three ways of getting to Malta from the Riviera. If you do not object to the probability of delay in the departure of the steamer; and further, if you do not object to long-since painted quarters, to a gritty coal-dusty feeling about the bed-linen, and to a peculiar odour suggestive of many previous passengers of all nations, which pervades the cabin accommodation generally, you can go, for the price of two hundred francs, by *La Junon*, or some of her sisters of the deep, from the port of Marseilles.

If you do, you will be very fairly fed and civilly waited on, and you will find amusing and intelligent companions in the officers of the ship, especially in the doctor, who is always prepared to cry, 'A bas le tisané!' in the same breath that he extols the virtues of good *Médoc* wine as a certain cure for all the ills that travelling flesh is heir to. You will be pretty well rocked in your bed at night, for the passage is not often a smooth one; but you will be rewarded for some endurance by seeing, in the day-time of

the seventy-two hours' passage, some very charming bits of Mediterranean scenery.

Out of the port of Marseilles, past Monte Christo's Château d'If, and along the coast by Toulon and Hyères, one enjoys a fine panorama. As the grand rock from which *Nôtre Dame de la Garde* looks over Marseilles recedes from view, one catches sight of those lofty hills above Toulon, where a young officer of artillery planted the battery with which he promised to answer with his head for compelling the evacuation of the town by the French Royalists and their English allies. He was as good as his word, and lived to conquer at Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena; and to find an overmatch for that brilliant battery of his at Moscow, at Leipsic, and at Waterloo.

If the Straits be made in the daytime, *La Junon* passes near Ajaccio, the birthplace of this same artillery officer, and farther on it sights the island home of Garibaldi, with the port of Maddalena. From the Straits of Bonifacio to the lovely island of Maritimo, the eastern-



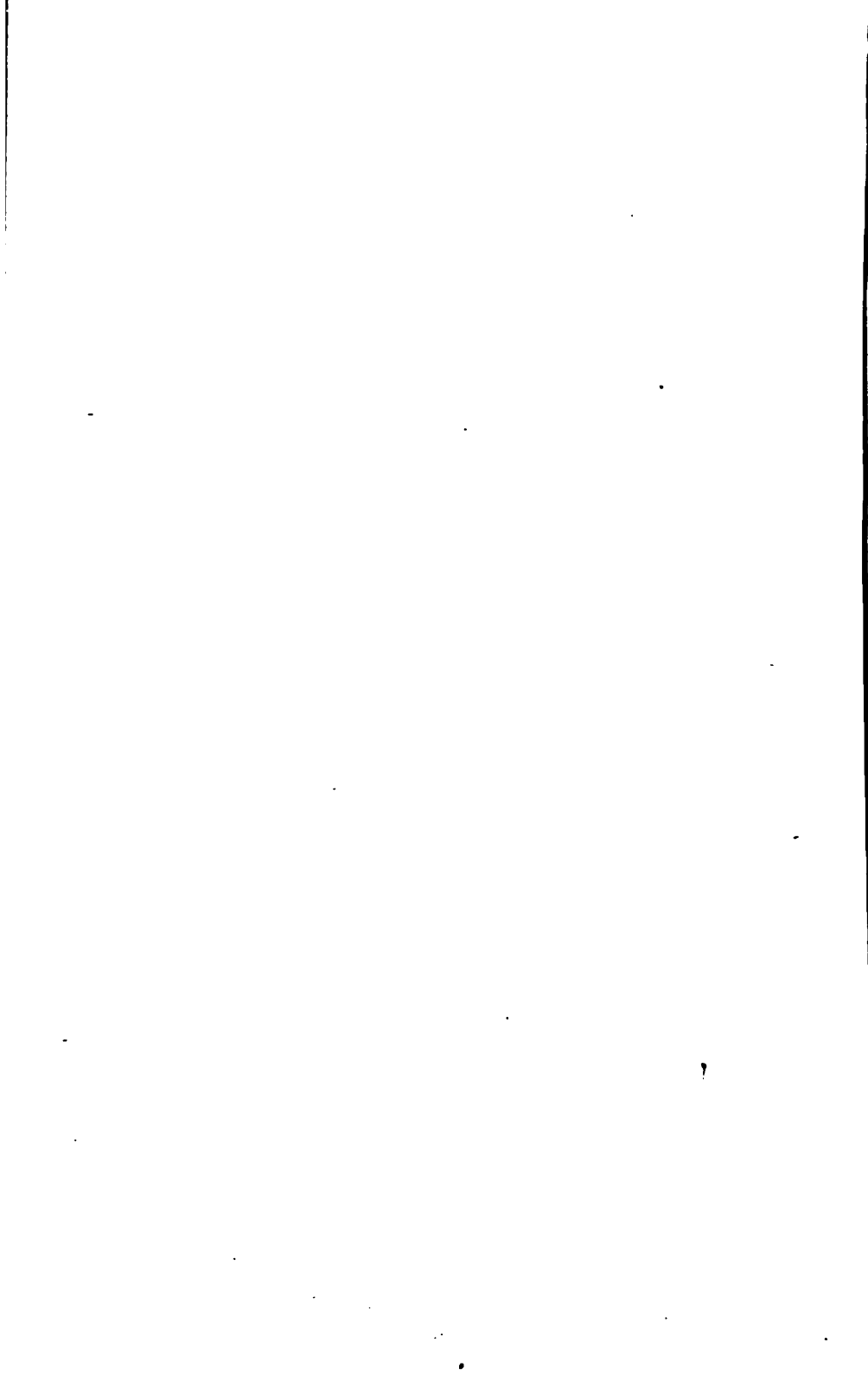


From the Painting]

THE PALM BRANCH.

[by M. ANTICIPA.

'Pines may tower, and laurels flourish--
 Deathless green is only thine ;
 Type of hearts which ains divine
 Cheer, and high communions nourish.' *Lyra Innocentium.*



most sentinel of Sardinia, is an hour's run; and from Maritimo La Junon bruises the water for eighteen hours more ere she casts anchor in Valletta.

There is another way, the *ferrovia*, from Genoa to Leghorn and Rome, or from Genoa to Florence and Rome, and thence to Naples, or, for those who wish to minimise the discomforts of the sea-passage, to Reggio. At Naples and at Reggio will be found a steamer, one of the Florio line, to convey the traveller to Messina. At Messina he can choose between a transshipment, which will put him in the direct route by sea to Malta, or he can 'take the care,' as the Americans have it, and go to Syracuse, there committing himself to the sea.

For those who really suffer from sea-sickness the railway route from Genoa to Reggio, and from Messina to Syracuse, is undoubtedly the best. It is also undoubtedly by far the most costly and inexpressibly the most tedious, for there is no 'Flying Dutchman' in the Italian peninsula, and *grande vitesse* is a property which is confined to French railways and to a few trains thereon. For him, however, who does not mind the weariness of the journey, nor the expensiveness of it, this method entails sea-travelling of less than a hundred miles. From Reggio to Messina is five miles; from Syracuse to Malta ninety more. But such a traveller loses an immensity of fine scenery. By far the most enjoyable method for the genuine traveller, distinguishing under that name a man who has a soul above his stomach, is to go by sea from Genoa to Malta. If fortunate enough to secure a passage either in the Mediterranean or the Scylla, large and excellent sea-boats, and admirably commanded, and further, if favoured with decently clear weather, he will find

that he is embarked for a kind of yacht voyage, in which he will see much fine coast scenery and visit many places of great interest, and that for a sum which will leave him a gainer, if it be compared with his necessary daily expenditure while travelling on shore. For one hundred and seventy *lire* one gets transported in a capital ship from Genoa to Malta, and is fed in hospitable wise—after the Italian method of cookery—for a whole week besides. By the way also he gets a sight of some of the most charming spots in the beautiful Mediterranean.

Before starting for the steamboat office I confer with mine host of the Grande Albergo, and take him into my confidence. I have several passages to pay for besides my own, and the 'tottle of the whole,' as Mr. Hume would have said, after studying the fares in the *indicateur*, stands at 525*f*.

'Are the passages paid in gold or in *lire*?'

'In *lire*, signor.'

These two words made music to the ear. Warned by a friendly French banker, I had armed myself with gold before quitting the territory of the Republic, one and indivisible, and on hearing the landlord's answer I sallied forth to reap my advantage.

Not to the steamboat office till after a previous call on the proprietor of one of those many offices for 'cambio valute' which abound in the neighbourhood of the port. The exchange is eight and something tiny per cent. I put twenty-five napoleons (*pièces de vingt francs*, as my French banker friend, correcting me, told me these pretty coins are now called) on the counter, and received in exchange a collection of garlic-scented bank-notes, representing five hundred and forty-three *lire*, and capable of buying value to that amount

within the kingdom of Italy. There is meaning, there is force in these italics. Outside the kingdom these notes lack power to conjure with; the foreigner will have none of them, and indeed has so poor an opinion of their value that he will not accept them in a mixed payment, even for so small a matter as a railway fare. Within the regions that own the sway of Vittorio Emanuele, however, they are motors of all kinds of activity; and though the subjects of that talented king will assuredly not refuse metallic payments—indeed they are loyally delighted whenever the unwary traveller gives them the opportunity of seeing their Caesar's image and superscription—they are nevertheless bound to give and take on the faith of paper money stamped for as low a value as fifty centimes.

From the Cambio Valute to the office of the Servizio Postale of Messrs. Florio is but a step. The short delay caused by the call on the moneychanger turns out to be worth precisely forty-three lire. The complaisant look of Signor Florio's manager undergoes modification when he finds that he gets paper for paper, notes instead of coin for tickets. But he cannot demand gold, and, his benignity or otherwise being to me a matter of minor importance, I walk forth from his office the holder of tickets ostensibly worth 525 francs, but which have cost me 18 francs less than 500 francs. Had I paid in gold, as but for an accident I should have done, my manager would have consented freely, and without fraud upon his employers he would have found himself on the transaction a happy gainer of some forty-eight francs—not a bad day's work for the Italian clerk. Cambio Valute is a great institution.

The Mediterraneo is a fine *piroscapo*. Once she was the City of

Cork, and did Transatlantic work, and was known at Sandy Hook and New York. This was in her maiden days. She married the Mediterranean and changed her name, and now, to the great benefit of travellers, pursues the even tenor of her way between Genoa and Sicily. Spacious are her sleeping cabins, airy is her saloon; the Italian commandante is instructive and obliging, and Giovannini, the second steward, is a gem of his profession.

Who so knowing in remedies against sea-sickness, who so tender and careful for those who are down, who so willing and intelligent in his waiting upon the hearty, as our friend Giovannini? He has been in the Italian navy; he fought at the battle of Lissa; he was commended 'for valour.' Giovannini is simply invaluable. His employers should be proud of him. We, in the Mediterraneo, look upon him as the 'be-all and end-all' of our comfort. Without him, to borrow a metaphor from the circumstances of the voyage, we should fall on Scylla or fall into Charybdis, and come to a doleful end on board. We vote him unanimously prince of stewards. Let us hope he as well liked us for his passengers.

From Genoa past Spezzia and the home of the Duilio and the 100-ton gun, to Leghorn, and to the fine harbour which owes so much to the last Grand Duke of Tuscany. Under the auspices of Giovannini we take advantage of the ten hours' stoppage to run up to Pisa, see the Leaning Tower, the Campo Santo, and the wonders of the church carving, and are again on board in plenty of time to get to sleep before starting again.

At Civit  Vecchia, that ancient gateway of Rome, we stop two hours, and are shown the place

where the French frigate *Orénoque* used to lie, that now vacant place bemourned of *Civita Vecchians* since the good sense and the good feeling of the French Republican Government recalled the useless menace to Italian unity. Besides this there is next to nothing to see at *Civita Vecchia*, even the old-world fort, which is but a standing monument of the difference between past and present, hardly repaying the trouble of a visit. *Giovannini* was right when he begged us not to weary ourselves with visiting the place. It is only a vexation to the spirit, allowing you to see the train which might take you to Rome, while the steamer declines to stop long enough in the port to allow of the return journey.

The *Mediterraneo* quits *Civita Vecchia*, and in twelve hours is closing upon *Ustica*, that rocky north-west corner of Sicily whereon stand a few farms, and whereon the Sicilian *Norvals* feed their flocks. It is a grand, noble piece of coast that stretches its veritable highlands from *Ustica* to *Monte Pellegrino*. The latter, towering high and sheer from the water, forms the southern horn of *Palermo Bay*, and is the rock whence springs that handsome mole which is at once the main harbour and the landing quay.

Rounding the point of the mole one sees an immediate alteration, not to say improvement, in the appearance of those many passengers who will insist on enjoying their prerogative of sea-sickness up to the last moment. The imposingly-dressed *carabinieri*, in blue alashed uniform, with silver epaulettes and lace, and with the unwieldiest of sabres, who have been presenting anything but a martial look ever since they got on board at *Leghorn*, now stiffen out and stiffen up into a terror to evil-

doers. The prisoners they have been nominally guarding could not look more miserable—one might also add more wicked—than they have done all the trip. Any feeling of satisfaction they might have had at relief from being sea-tossed is counterbalanced by the prospect, of which the smooth water is a witness, of being so much nearer to their place of punishment. The picturesquely-coloured bundles of clothes which have been huddled under plaids and wraps about the deck now take fresh shape as men and women, and by the time the steamer has performed a movement akin to that which circus horses perform when dancing a quadrille, and has backed and sidled herself into stern moorings among the group of steamers, there emerge from cabins and other nooks and crannies of the *Mediterraneo* people of whose presence on board one had had no idea. The management on board these boats does not necessarily incur much cost when it hospitably promises to include in the passage-money the provision of a good *table d'hôte*.

Giovannini saves me from the clutches of a water-brigand, of a kind not special to *Palermo*—by no means unknown, indeed, on our London river—and I stand on the mole an unplundered and unruffled admirer of the magnificent panorama. On the right, *Monte Pellegrino*, with its Calvary and its richly-adorned shrine of *St. Rosalie*, respected even by brigands; in front, the new and the shipping part of the town; on the left, the broad bay, backed to the northward by the mountains of *Palermo* province; whilst lying around, and stretching inland from the lower part of the bay, is the grand city of *Palermo* itself.

There can be no choice between the *Hôtel di Trinacria* and any

other. The Hôtel de France, to which the steamer folk would send you, is good, but inferior to the Trinacria, where the fare is excellent, the rooms are good, and the view is enchanting. But it is not for hotels one has come to Palermo.

One wanders through the quaint streets, with their *quattro cantoni*, or four-streets-meet, at every important traverse in the line of thoroughfare; one looks into the handsome shops, the gorgeous churches, and stops short of the Porta Nuova to go over the singular and cold cathedral, with the marks of many architects and many eras on its walls and pinnacles. In the houses, in the public buildings, in the people, in the language, one sees without seeking the medley of races who have from time to time held sway at Palermo. Greek, Saracen, Norman, Spaniard, French, and Italian, all are represented here. In the houses, Saracen and Spaniard are seen; in the churches, Norman, Spaniard, and Italian. In the language all the nationalities mingle with an agreement that never existed amongst the nationalities themselves.

Here at the Porta Nuova, in the rooms over the gateway, stayed Giuseppe Garibaldi what time he came across the mountains with the force which beat the King's troops outside Messina, and compelled the garrison of that town to capitulate. Hard by is the Palazzo Reale, rich in inlaid staircases, with a bijou chapel all mosaic, with a campanile commanding splendid views of the rich, long, and deep valley in which Palermo stands, and with memories which carry the mind back to Roger, King of Sicily, and to the emirs whom he dispossessed.

The sun is setting as we pass under the Porta Nuova, which leads by the Monreale road into

the country. For the first time we remember what we have heard and read about *I Briganti*, whom we somewhat fondly imagined to belong to the country districts alone. We turn back into the city, and across the Parade-ground into the long street already ascended, and resolve to confer with wiser heads than our own before going outside the gates.

Giovannini rejects all suggestions as to the unsafety of the road. He himself is Palermitan. He is quite sure about it. There are no brigands; and between Palermo and Monreale *si trovano i posti militari per tutt' il cammino*.

Mr. Morrison, the obliging English and American banker, 'thinks there is no danger;' he 'has heard of brigands nearer than Monreale;' but on the whole thinks one may go, because, as Giovannini had said, 'there are now posts of the Bersaglieri all the way between the two places.'

'Will Captain M— give Giovannini a day's leave?'

'Does the Signor Inglese wish it?'

The Signor Inglese would much like to have Giovannini's escort to Monreale. *Giovannini è alla disposizione del signore*.

And so with a trusty companion, with a stalwart coachman and a pair of fleet horses, we drove to Monreale, up the ascent which gives view after view of the utmost beauty, past the long-deserted ruins of the Angevin town, and the site of those gardens wherein the Palermitans and their French rulers walked that eventful night, after the Vespers sternly known in history as Sicilian. We see with rapt admiration that wonderful cathedral church in which Norman kings of Sicily sleep; in which the founder, whatever his secular failings, was downright in the thoroughness of his church work, and was not above

borrowing ideas from the higher civilisation he had conquered, to secure magnificence in the church he dedicated to the God of Norman Christianity.

We enjoy it all—the grandeur, the finish, the stupendous proportions; we wander among the cloisters, decline with thanks the offer of a visit to the adjoining monastery, and then prepare to return. For the officer in command at Monreale will not allow us to proceed to the convent in the hills, three miles beyond the town, unless we take an escort of troops. We listen to the officer's account of the audacity of *Signori i Briganti*—how that sometimes they will even attack an escorted party if the lure be great enough; how lately they attacked one of his own patrols, killing a sergeant and wounding two soldiers, close to Monreale; and how there was no absolute security beyond his post. We listen to all this, and conclude that our desire to see the famous convent is less than our desire to avoid giving any occasion to the brigands. We thank the lieutenant for his courtesy; note in our memories his assurance that till he and his brother officers are allowed to shoot priests, brigands will flourish; and reëntering our carriage, drive back in safety to Palermo, and to the Mediterraneo.

Space fails to tell of the vaults of the Cappucini monastery, where four thousand baked, and some embalmed, bodies, stand side by side along the walls, or recline, dressed as in life, in glass cases or wooden boxes. It fails also to tell of much that remains to be said about Palermo, where Englishmen would much more congregate, both for health and for commerce, but for the standing discouragement and dread inspired by the brigand pest. Till Mr. Rose ceases to be liable

to capture within gunshot of a railway-station, till the working of the *Mafia* and other secret societies can be rudely stopped by the law, till perhaps the desire of the pleasant officer at Monreale can be gratified, it is impossible that Palermo can expand for London, or any other Society, its vast natural and artificial resources as a winter resort. It is idle to expect it.

The Mediterraneo goes her way, and after plunging about in the seas, which are always more or less agitated—*mare grosso*, as the Italians love to call them—about the northern parts of the island, feels her way down the Straits of Messina. She implicitly heeds the poet's warning to avoid Scylla, for that is an ugly rock jutting out from the sides of the steep land, on the crown of which stand the great mountains of Calabria; but furnished, as the bark of Palinurus was not furnished, with excellent steam-engines, she is less mindful of the direction against falling into Charybdis; on the contrary, she steams right through it, and, keeping a straight course on the whirlpool side, makes for the entrance to the splendid harbour of Messina.

Here, alas, one has to realise the truth of the aphorism that the best friends must part. Giovannini, who has been so invaluable to us all the way from Genoa, is no longer to bring the morning cup of coffee to the cabin—no longer to interest us with descriptions of this headland or with accounts of that castle. With him, with the Mediterraneo herself, we have here to part, and transfer our baggage and ourselves to that pretty, yacht-like, but O, so much smaller, steamer, *Il Campidoglio*, which is lying two cables ahead of us. Giovannini renders a last, but not least, service by undertaking the whole business of transfer; so leaving our worldly goods to his sure

hands and eyes, in full confidence of reunion with them on board the other ship, we are rowed on shore, and find ourselves in the town of Leonato and the birthplace of Hero.

Dogberry and Verges have both passed away; Hero has once more passed into the marble statue whence love had power to draw her; and the sharp wit of Beatrice no longer vexes the soul of Benedick, whose toothache has long since been cured by the prime curer of all the ills that flesh and teeth are heirs to. Not only has Don John made his exit, but, under the auspices of Garibaldi, all his kinsfolk have gone too. No more can Conrad be guilty of 'flat burglary as ever was committed,' by calling 'the prince's brother, villain.' No more does Dogberry 'instruct the watch,' or boast of his two coats, or of being 'as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina.' 'Old times are changed, old manners gone;' and the traveller who thinks of the day when Spanish viceroys dwelt in the town, and collected fleets for the succour of Malta, or for the destruction of the Turk—he who remembers what Messina was, and compares her with what she is, in spite of the commerce which still flows to her, of the gifts Nature has lavished upon her, may well write 'Ichabod' over her name in his book of recollection.

Out of the harbour, one sharp turn to the right, that is, to the southward, and we are once more in the Straits, crossing the margin of the redoubted Charybdis—marked in white foam—are passing by Reggio, that Rhegium whither St. Paul came after he 'had fetched a compass.'

The Campidoglio is to the Mediterranean as a Boulogne steamer is to a New York packet. She kicks about mightily on her way to Catania, that standing tempta-

tion to Providence which stands at the foot of Etna. Those seeming rocks on the sea-shore are blocks of lava, tombstones of the city which lies, calcined and in ashes, under the site on which the present Catania stands. Time after time the place has been more or less ruined; and oftener still would have suffered, had not St. Agatha, who has the city in charge, been moved at the sight of her veil, brought out of its shrine at the cathedral by the terrified but faithful Catanians, and turned the molten stream into another channel. Very grateful are the Catanians to St. Agatha; and quite ready are they at any given time to outbid the Ephesians, both in time and fervour, in proclaiming the greatness of their goddess.

Beautiful is the sight of Etna, which bursts upon the view as one passes from the wharf, past the archbishop's palace, covered with the most brilliant and lovely Bourgainvilliers, and turns to enter the city by the water-gate. There, as in some vast theatre, the arch of the gate acting as proscenium, one sees the great square, and the long, wide, and gradually ascending street, which is the main thoroughfare leading out of it, and which has for background to its long vista the snow-covered smoke-crowned mountain, under which Jupiter flung the rebellious Titan. At night, when this long vista is lighted up, and the moon throws into relief the form of the mountain, the sight is one of fairyland. In this delightfully placed city there are many members, as there doubtless are also many readers, of London Society; for Catania has long been favourably known, with Arci Reale, as a winter resort for delicate Westerns.

Those who wish to have as little as possible to do with the Campidoglio can go by rail to Syracuse;

but they will in so doing miss some of the finest views of Etna. Whichever way they go, they should stop a while in Syracuse. They should also visit Augusta, with its now deserted fortifications, once of great strength, and the scene of many a Bourbon tyranny. It was at Augusta that the French made their last stand and final capitulation, when Hubert of Orleans strove in vain to quell the storm which rose after the Sicilian Vespers. It was at Syracuse—but we must not tarry to say what happened at Syracuse, the home and the grave of Archimedes, the stronghold of Dionysius, the pride, and at one time the dread, of the old-world powers of the Mediterranean. Already we have tarried long upon our way to Malta; and if we would take passage thither in our friend the Campidoglio, which is lying in the harbour with the steam already up, and blowing shrilly off, we must content ourselves with having seen the Greek and Roman theatres, the wonderful ear of Dionysius, the tomb of Archimedes, and the sweet water-spring of Jove's fair nymph Arethusa.

Let us draw a veil over our recollection of the nine-hour trip in that sodawater-bottle-shaped Campidoglio, between Cape Passero and Malta. To what purpose did we eat that excellent dinner, provided by mine host of the Albergo del Sole, before embarking? Why, O why, did I venture to smoke that second Italian-bought cigar?

The would-be, but vain, comforter, upon whose shoulders the mantle of Giovannini had descended, informed me, about 7 A.M., that Malta was in sight.

I did not embrace the man, for he was a steward, and had been active in his vocation for some hours past; and there was that indescribable something—shall I

call it an *afflatus*?—about him which even garlic could not kill.

But with his information hope revived. We—of our own following, I mean—rushed on deck, and gladdened our eyes with the sight which the sun, dispersing the morning mist, gilded as it opened out. On the right lay the high cliffs of Gozo, in front the island of Malta, stretching out its bays and inlets right and left of Valletta. Far inland we can see, on the high hill-ridge towards Gozo, the palace of St. Antonio, fair summer retreat of the Governor, and now the abode of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. The forts are becoming each moment more distinct. There is Ricasoli; that is St. Angelo behind it. There is St. Elmo; to the right of it Fort Tigné, with Sliema Hill beyond; while above St. Julian's Bay rise the buildings of Pembroke Camp, and the strong commanding works of the New Fort.

The signal-staff on the top of Valletta has our mail-steamer flag up. There is a general shaking of feathers among the poor human fowl on board, and an evident belief that ere long the waves will cease from troubling. Three-quarters of an hour more, and we get an outside view of the Campidoglio, anchored close to the Custom-house wharf, under the shadow of the high Baracca, and within range of a plunging fire from some dozen great batteries.

In our anxiety to get ashore we hardly heed the presence of Sir James Drummond's superb fleet, which lies at the several moorings—a grand sight for Englishmen to see. We pass the ordeal of the Customs, settle ourselves into a car, like, but with a difference, to those one sees in the pictures of Velasquez, and drive

off to Ellul's hospitable quarters in Strada Santa Lucia.

To obtain membership in the Union Club is the first duty which a man owes to himself after being six hours in Malta. The facilities for obtaining membership are ample and generous, especially for temporary residents, and the advantages given in return for the moderate subscription are very great indeed. He who has once availed himself of the hospitality of the club, which has its being at the Auberge de Provence, will find when he comes to analyse his pleasant recollections of Malta that this hospitality was a principal factor in his enjoyment.

The Auberge de Provence, once the home of the Provençal Knights of Malta, stands in the best part of Strada Reale. Within its doors may be found the most comfortable counterpart of London club accommodation, and willing service. A bachelor or a stray Benedict, stranded by himself at Malta, can make himself as happy here as Maltese creature comforts can make him. He may here, with fair chance of success, attempt to solace himself for the absence of Juanita; he may here at his ease compose those touching appeals which shall end by wringing consent from Juanita's obdurate parents.

Membership in the garrison library at the main guard is almost as necessary as the club to one's well-being in Malta. To one's womankind there it is indispensable. The garrison library is the Ladies' Club meeting-place—the malicious add 'flirtation tryst.' The last epithet is of course libellous, and, properly speaking, should find no place in this veracious chronicle. But for many of the purposes for which a club is valuable to men the garrison library is valuable to ladies. They can read, write, think, admire, and be

admired, see all the latest telegrams, magazines, and newspapers, and pick up all the *on dits* and *canards* of Valletta. There is no refreshment-room, to be sure; but then just across the street is there not that enticing retreat where 'the Sick Man' purveys the coolest of Italian ices, the daintiest of French *confiserie*, the iciest of drinks? Refreshments of a more substantial kind are also at call, and the ladies have in 'the Sick Man'* an obliging ally, who makes them independent of all club kitchens. Then for shopping, what point of departure so convenient?

If the winter resident at Malta have a mind to house himself, he can find good quarters in Valletta, but better in Floriana, outside the inner line of fortifications. If he decide for hotel life, he can lodge fairly, and be fed sumptuously, at several places in Valletta for eight shillings a day. But by far the best hotel of Valletta is, to use an Irishism, not in Valletta at all, but at Sliema, across the creek of that name. There, under the roof of the courtly Ellul, he can enjoy not only excellent quarters and excellent fare, but the loveliest views of the district. From the house-top of this Imperial Hotel the eye ranges over a wide-spread panorama of the island. High upon a hill seven miles to the south-west stands Città Vecchia, the walled capital of the island ere John de Vallette built the city which now crowns Mount Scieerras. Here, as tradition holds, was the house of Publius, the chief man of the island, who 'courteously entreated' the shipwrecked Apostle Paul. Within three miles of it is St. Paul's Bay

* Why the obliging Italian who keeps the best confectioner's shop in Strada Reale—that is, in Malta—should be known universally as 'the Sick Man,' the writer sought to know, but never learned.

itself, enclosing a small islet on which the travellers are said to have lighted the fire whence an adder sprang upon the supposed murderer's finger. There is yet the place 'where two seas met;' there is still the creek into which the mariners strove 'if it were possible to thrust in the ship.'

East from Città Vecchia, as one stands on the Sliema housetop, lies Verdala, a summer residence once of the Grand Master, now of the Governor, of Malta. Krendi, that strange remnant of pre-historic temples, lies hidden behind the southern cliffs; and as the eye travels eastwards over the landscape it rests upon the Mohammedan burying-place, many a fine Christian church, and the serried streets, forts, and buildings of the key of the Mediterranean.

There is abundance of amusement, there are endless objects of interest, for the winter sojourner in Malta. The hands of the soldier and the monk are indelibly stamped on the place. From the time when Charles V. by his charter, still exhibited in the armoury, granted the islands of Malta and Gozo and the state of Tripoli to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, the sword and the cowl have held sway in the island. At St. Elmo you can still trace, amid the bastions and batteries of that great castle, the small star fort, isolated from all succour, which cost the Moslem eight thousand men before he took it. You can still see, preserved by the pious care of after-times, the chapel in which the sixty surviving, but none unwounded, members of the garrison partook of their last communion at midnight before the final assault.

At St. Angelo, across the harbour, you can see what was the citadel of Malta, what time the borg or hamlet which clustered inside the then enceinte, was as the

germ of the present city. Strangely would John de Vallette, that great Grand Master, who hurled back the power of the Turk shattered and riven, rub his mediæval eyes and clasp his gauntleted hands in wonder, could he see the weapons which have replaced his culverins and bombards upon the walls of St. Angelo.

Astonished indeed would be those valiant soldiers of La Vallette who dived and swam, sword in mouth, to attack their assailants in the water, could they see the torpedoes which have supplanted the pile-driven barbed palisade, upon the integrity of which hung for a time the fate of Malta. Great would have been their astonishment, as great as was our pleasure, could they have seen, as we saw from the batteries they so well defended, the long slightly form of the *Serapis*, steaming majestically past Ricasoli, and shaking to the vibration of well-rammed three-hundred-pounders engaged in the peaceful and loyal occupation of saluting the Prince of Wales homeward bound from India.

Then went Malta quite mad. The thunder and *rimbombo* of oft-repeated salutes, the decoration of streets, the illumination of houses, the presentation of addresses, procession-forming, torpedo-firing, sham assaults upon the fortress, illuminations of the fleet, of Grand Harbour, of Valletta, dinner-giving, ball-giving, gala performances at the Opera,—these, and the like of these, produced a general vertigo in the brain of Malta, which outlasted the Prince's visit.

Not ours to describe the days of rejoicing. Far abler pens have already written the history of that time. Whether they will faithfully record the jealousies which arose in consequence of non-invitations to this dinner at Government House, to that breakfast on the

Serapis, in consequence of Miss A. being asked to dance with the Prince, while Mrs. B. was not asked; in consequence of Colonel C. being placed at table below Captain D. of the Warhorse frigate, it is impossible to say, neither does it much matter. Whether the official chroniclers perpetuate the fact that the torpedoes refused to explode themselves, when called upon, in the Marsa Muscetto, or that the anger of certain Maltese gentry exploded when not called upon, because of slights real or imaginary, is equally immaterial. Accidents will happen to the best regulated programmes, especially if liable to sudden alterations. There is no need to write them down—rather the contrary; and all that need be remembered of the visit are the many undoubted pleasures to which it certainly gave rise.

Malta as a winter resort is at once brighter and cheaper—far cheaper—than the favourite towns of the Riviera. It has a *sirocco*, it is true, an evil wind that ruffles the smoothest tempers, and imparts to the whole body, inside and out, a feeling that it has been rubbed with sand-paper. But then there

is no such *mistral* as Cannes and the Niçois own, and the one must be set against the other.

There is society—plenty of it. There is the gaiety and life inseparable from a great military and naval station; and there is an activity in commerce, represented by not less than six vessels in and out every day. The island itself is interesting—in parts it is pretty—and house-rent and living are marvelously cheap. Many avail themselves of these advantages between November and May, and find themselves the better in health, heavier in pocket, and the wiser for many pleasant associations, at the end of it. In the interval between the months named let London Society take it as true, that they would do well to revive their partiality for an old favourite resort, which has been too much neglected of late years. In the hope that the residence of the Duchess of Edinburgh in the island will contribute towards this result, and with the conviction that English invalids will benefit thereby, the writer brings these papers on the Winter Resorts of London Society to a close.

FRANCIS DAVENANT.

MICHAEL STROGOFF, OR THE RUSSIAN COURIER.

BY JULES VERNE.

PART II.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE STEPPE.

MICHAEL STROGOFF and Nadia were once more as free as they had been in the journey from Perm to the banks of the Irtych. But how the conditions under which they travelled were altered! Then, a comfortable tarantass, fresh horses, — well-kept post-horses, — assured the rapidity of their journey.

Now they were on foot; it was utterly impossible to procure any other means of locomotion, they were without resources, not knowing how to obtain the commonest necessities, and they had still four hundred versts to go. Moreover, Michael could now only see with Nadia's eyes.

As to the friend whom chance had given them, they had just lost him, and fearful might be his fate. Michael had thrown himself down under the brush-wood at the side of the road. Nadia stood beside him waiting for the word from him to continue the march.

It was ten o'clock. The sun had more than three hours before disappeared below the horizon. There was not a house, not a hut, in sight. The last of the Tartars were lost in the distance. Michael and Nadia were quite alone.

'What will they do with our friend?' exclaimed the girl. 'Poor Nicholas! Our meeting will have been fatal to him.'

Michael made no response.

'Michael,' continued Nadia, 'do you not know that he defended you when you were the Tartars' sport; that he risked his life for me?'

Michael was still silent, motionless, his face buried in his hands; of what was he thinking? Perhaps, although he did not answer, he heard Nadia speak.

Yes, he heard her; for when the young girl added,

'Where shall I lead you, Michael?'

'To Irkutsk,' he replied.

'By the high-road?'

'Yes, Nadia.'

Michael was still the same man who had sworn to accomplish his object, whatever happened. To follow the high-road was certainly to go the shortest way. If the vanguard of Feofar-Khan's troops appeared, it would then be time to strike across the country.

Nadia took Michael's hand, and they started.

The next morning, the 12th of September, twenty versts further, they made a short halt in the village of Joulounovskoë. It was burnt and deserted. All night Nadia had tried to see if the body of Nicholas had not been left on the road; but it was in vain that she looked among the ruins, and searched among the dead. Till then, he seemed to have been spared. But might they not be reserving him for some cruel torture on their arrival in the camp at Irkutsk?

Nadia, exhausted with hunger, from which her companion was also suffering terribly, was fortunate enough to find in one of the houses a quantity of dried meat and 'soukharis'—pieces of bread, which, dried by evaporation, preserve their nutritive qualities for an indefinite time.

Michael and the girl loaded themselves with as much as they could carry. They had thus a supply of food for several days; and as to water, there would be no want of that in a district rendered fertile by the numerous little affluents of the Angara.

They continued their journey. Michael walked with a firm step, and only slackened his pace for his companion's sake. Nadia, not wishing to retard him, obliged herself to walk. Happily, he could not see to what a miserable state fatigue had reduced her.

However, Michael guessed it.

'You are quite done up, poor child,' he said sometimes.

'No,' she would reply.

'When you can no longer walk, I will carry you, Nadia.'

'Yes, Michael.'

During this day they came to the little river Oka, but it was fordable, and they had no difficulty in crossing.

The sky was cloudy and the temperature moderate. There was some fear that the rain might come on, which would much have increased their misery. A few showers fell, but they did not last.

They went on as before, hand in hand, speaking little, Nadia looking about on every side; twice a day they halted. Six hours of the night were given to sleep. In a few huts Nadia again found a little mutton, which is so common in this country that it is sold at two copecks and a half a pound.

But, contrary to Michael's hopes, there was not a single beast of burden in the country; horses, camels—all had been either killed or carried off. They must still continue to plod on across this weary steppe on foot.

The third Tartar column, on its way to Irkutsk, had left plain-traces of its course: here a dead horse, there an abandoned cart. The bodies of unfortunate Siberians lay along the road, principally at the entrance to villages. Nadia, overcoming her repugnance, looked at all these corpses.

In fact, the danger lay not before but behind. The advance guard of the Emir's army, commanded by Ivan Ogareff, might at any moment appear. The boats sent down the lower Yenisei must by this time have reached Krasnoïarsk, and been made use of. The road was therefore open to the invaders. No Russian force could be opposed to them between Krasnoïarsk and Lake Baikal; Michael therefore expected the arrival of the Tartar scouts.

At each halt Nadia climbed some hill, and looked anxiously to the westward; but as yet no cloud of dust had signalled the approach of a troop of horse.

Then the march was resumed; and when Michael felt that he was dragging poor Nadia forward too rapidly, he went at a slower pace. They spoke little, and only of Nicholas. The young girl recalled all that this companion of a few days had done for them.

In answering, Michael tried to give Nadia some hope, of which he did not feel a spark himself, for he well knew that the unfortunate fellow would not escape death.

One day Michael said to the girl,

'You never speak to me of my mother, Nadia.'

His mother! Nadia had never wished to do so. Why renew his grief? Was not the old Siberian dead? Had not her son given the last kiss to her corpse stretched on the plain of Tomsk?

'Speak to me of her, Nadia,' said Michael. 'Speak—you will please me.'

And then Nadia did what she had not done before. She told all that had passed between Marfa and herself since their meeting at Omsk, where they had seen each other for the first time. She said how an inexplicable instinct had led her towards the old prisoner without knowing who she was, what care she had bestowed on her, and what encouragement she had received in return. At that time Michael Strogoff had been to her but Nicholas Korpan-off.

'Whom I ought always to have been,' replied Michael, his brow darkening.

Then later he added,

'I have broken my oath, Nadia,—I had sworn not to see my mother!'

'But you did not try to see her, Michael,' replied Nadia. 'Chance alone brought you into her presence.'

'I had sworn, whatever might happen, not to betray myself.'

'Michael, Michael, at sight of the lash raised upon Marfa could you refrain? No! No oath could prevent a son from succouring his mother!'

'I have broken my oath, Nadia,' returned Michael. 'May God and the Father pardon me!'

'Michael,' resumed the girl, 'I have a question to ask you. Do not answer it if you think you ought not. Nothing from you would vex me.'

'Speak, Nadia.'

'Why, now that the Czar's letter has been taken from you,

are you so anxious to reach Irkutsk?'

Michael tightly pressed his companion's hand, but he did not answer.

'Did you know the contents of that letter before you left Moscow?'

'No, I did not know it.'

'Must I think, Michael, that the wish alone to place me in my father's hands draws you towards Irkutsk?'

'No, Nadia,' replied Michael gravely. 'I should deceive you if I allowed you to believe that it was so. I go where duty orders me to go. As to taking you to Irkutsk, is it not you, Nadia, who are now taking me there? Do I not see with your eyes; and is it not your hand that guides me? Have you not repaid a hundredfold the help which I was able to give you at first? I do not know if fate will cease to go against us; but the day on which you thank me for having placed you in your father's hands, I, in my turn, will thank you for having led me to Irkutsk.'

'Poor Michael!' answered Nadia, with emotion. 'Do not speak so. That is not the answer to my question. Michael, why, now, are you in such haste to reach Irkutsk?'

'Because I must be there before Ivan Ogareff,' exclaimed Michael.

'Even now?'

'Even now; and I will be there too!'

In uttering these last words, Michael did not speak solely through hatred to the traitor. But Nadia understood that her companion had not told, or could not tell, her all.

On the 15th of September, three days later, the two reached the village of Kouitounskoë, seventy versts from Toulounovskoë. The

young girl suffered dreadfully. Her aching feet could scarcely support her; but she fought, she struggled, against her weariness, and her only thought was this,

'Since he cannot see me, I will go on till I drop.'

There were no obstacles on this part of the journey, no danger either since the departure of the Tartars, only much fatigue.

For three days it continued thus. It was plain that the third invading column was advancing rapidly in the east; that could be seen by the ruins which they left after them, the cold cinders, and the already decomposing corpses.

There was nothing to be seen in the west; the Emir's advanced guard had not yet appeared. Michael began to consider the various reasons which might have caused this delay. Was a sufficient force of Russians directly menacing Tomsk or Krasnoiarsk? Did the third column, isolated from the others, run a risk of being cut off? If this was the case, it would be easy for the Grand Duke to defend Irkutsk, and any time gained against an invasion was a step towards repulsing it.

Michael sometimes let his thoughts run on these hopes, but he soon saw their improbability, and felt that the salvation of the Grand Duke depended alone on him.

Sixty versts separate Kouitounskoë from Kimilteiskoë, a little village situated at a short distance from the Dinka, a tributary of the Augara. Michael thought with some apprehension of the obstacle which this affluent placed in his way. There was not the remotest chance of finding anything like a boat, and he remembered having already crossed it in happier times when it was difficult to ford. But this once crossed, no other river

interrupted the road to Irkutsk, two hundred and thirty versts from thence.

It would only take three days to reach Kimilteiskoë. Nadia dragged herself along. Whatever might be her moral energy, her physical strength would soon fail her. Michael knew it only too well.

If he had not been blind, Nadia would have said to him,

'Go, Michael; leave me in some hut! Reach Irkutsk! Accomplish your mission! See my father! Tell him where I am! Tell him that I wait for him, and you both will know where to find me! Start! I am not afraid! I will hide myself from the Tartars! I will take care of myself for him, for you! Go, Michael! I can go no farther! . . .'

Many times Nadia was obliged to stop. Michael then took her in his arms, and having no longer to think of her fatigue, walked more rapidly and with his indefatigable step.

On the 18th of September, at ten in the evening, Kimilteiskoë was at last entered. From the top of a hill Nadia saw in the horizon a long light line. It was the Dinka. A few lightning flashes were reflected in the water; summer lightning, without thunder.

Nadia led her companion through the ruined village. The cinders were quite cold. The last of the Tartars had passed through at least five or six days before.

Arrived at the outskirts of the village, Nadia sank down on a stone bench.

'Shall we make a halt?' asked Michael.

'It is night, Michael,' answered Nadia. 'Do you not want to rest a few hours?'

'I would rather have crossed the Dinka,' replied Michael; 'I

should like to put that between us and the Emir's advanced guard. But you can scarcely drag yourself along, my poor Nadia!

'Come, Michael,' returned Nadia, seizing her companion's hand and drawing him forward.

Two or three versts further the Dinka flowed across the Irkutsk road. The young girl wished to attempt this last effort asked by her companion. She found her way by the light from the flashes. They were then crossing a boundless desert, in the midst of which was lost the little river. Not a tree nor a hillock broke the flatness. Not a breath disturbed the atmosphere, whose calmness would allow the slightest sound to travel an immense distance.

Suddenly Michael and Nadia stopped, as if their feet had been caught in some crevice in the ground.

The barking of a dog came across the steppe.

'Do you hear?' said Nadia.

Then a mournful cry succeeded it; a despairing cry, like the last appeal of a human being about to die.

'Nicholas! Nicholas!' cried the girl, feeling a foreboding of evil.

Michael, who was listening, shook his head.

'Come, Michael, come!' said Nadia.

And she, who just now was dragging herself with difficulty along, suddenly recovered strength, under violent excitement.

'We have left the road,' said Michael, feeling that he was treading no longer on powdery soil, but on short grass.

'Yes . . . we must! . . . ' returned Nadia. 'It was there, on the right, from which the cry came.'

In a few minutes they were not more than half a verst from the river.

A second bark was heard, but although more feeble, it was certainly nearer.

Nadia stopped.

'Yes,' said Michael; 'it is Serko barking. . . He has followed his master.'

'Nicholas!' called the girl.

Her cry was unanswered.

A few birds of prey alone rose and disappeared in the sky.

Michael listened. Nadia gazed over the plain illumined now and again with electric light, but she saw nothing.

And yet a voice was again raised, this time murmuring in a plaintive tone, 'Michael! . . . '

Then a dog, all bloody, bounded up to Nadia.

It was Serko.

Nicholas could not be far off. He alone could have murmured the name of Michael. Where was he? Nadia had no strength to call again.

Michael, crawling on the ground, felt about with his hands.

Suddenly Serko uttered a fresh bark, and darted towards a gigantic bird which had swooped down.

It was a vulture. When Serko ran towards it, it rose, but returning to the charge, it struck the dog. The latter leapt up at it; a blow from the formidable beak alighted on his head, and this time Serko fell back lifeless on the ground.

At the same time a cry of horror escaped Nadia.

'There . . . there!' she exclaimed.

A head issued from the ground! She had stumbled against it in the darkness.

Nadia fell on her knees beside it.

Nicholas, buried up to his neck, according to the atrocious Tartar custom, had been left in the steppe

to die of hunger and thirst, and perhaps by the teeth of wolves or beaks of birds of prey.

Frightful torture for the victim imprisoned in the ground, the earth pressed down so that he cannot move, his arms bound to his body like those of a corpse in its coffin. The miserable wretch, living in the mould of clay from which he is powerless to break out, can only long for the death which is so slow in coming.

There the Tartars had buried their prisoner three days before! . . . For three days Nicholas waited for the help which now came too late!

The vultures had caught sight of the head on a level with the ground, and for some hours the dog had been defending his master against these ferocious birds.

Michael dug at the ground with his knife to release their friend.

The eyes of Nicholas, which till then had been closed, opened.

He recognised Michael and Nadia. Then,

'Farewell, my friends,' he murmured. 'I am glad to have seen you again. Pray for me.'

These words were his last.

Michael continued to dig, though the ground, having been tightly rammed down, was as hard as a stone; and he managed at last to get out the body of the unhappy man. He listened if his heart was still beating. It was still.

He wished to bury him that he might not be left exposed on the steppe; and the hole into which Nicholas had been placed when living he enlarged, so that he might be placed in it dead. The faithful Serko was laid by his master. At that moment a great noise was heard on the road, about half a verst distant.

Michael Strogoff listened.

It was evidently a detachment

of horse advancing towards the Dinka.

'Nadia, Nadia!' he said, in a low voice.

Nadia, who was kneeling in prayer, arose.

'Look, look!' said he.

'The Tartars!' she whispered.

It was indeed the Emir's advance-guard, passing rapidly along the road to Irkutsk.

'They shall not prevent me from burying him,' said Michael.

And he continued his work.

Soon the body of Nicholas, the hands crossed on the breast, was laid in the tomb. Michael and Nadia, kneeling, prayed a last time for the poor fellow, inoffensive and good, who had paid for his devotion towards them with his life.

'And now,' said Michael, as he threw in the earth, 'the wolves of the steppe will not devour him.' Then he shook his fist at the troop of horsemen who were passing.

'Forward, Nadia!' he said.

Michael could not follow the road, now occupied by the Tartars. He must cross the steppe and turn to Irkutsk. He had not now to trouble himself about crossing the Dinka.

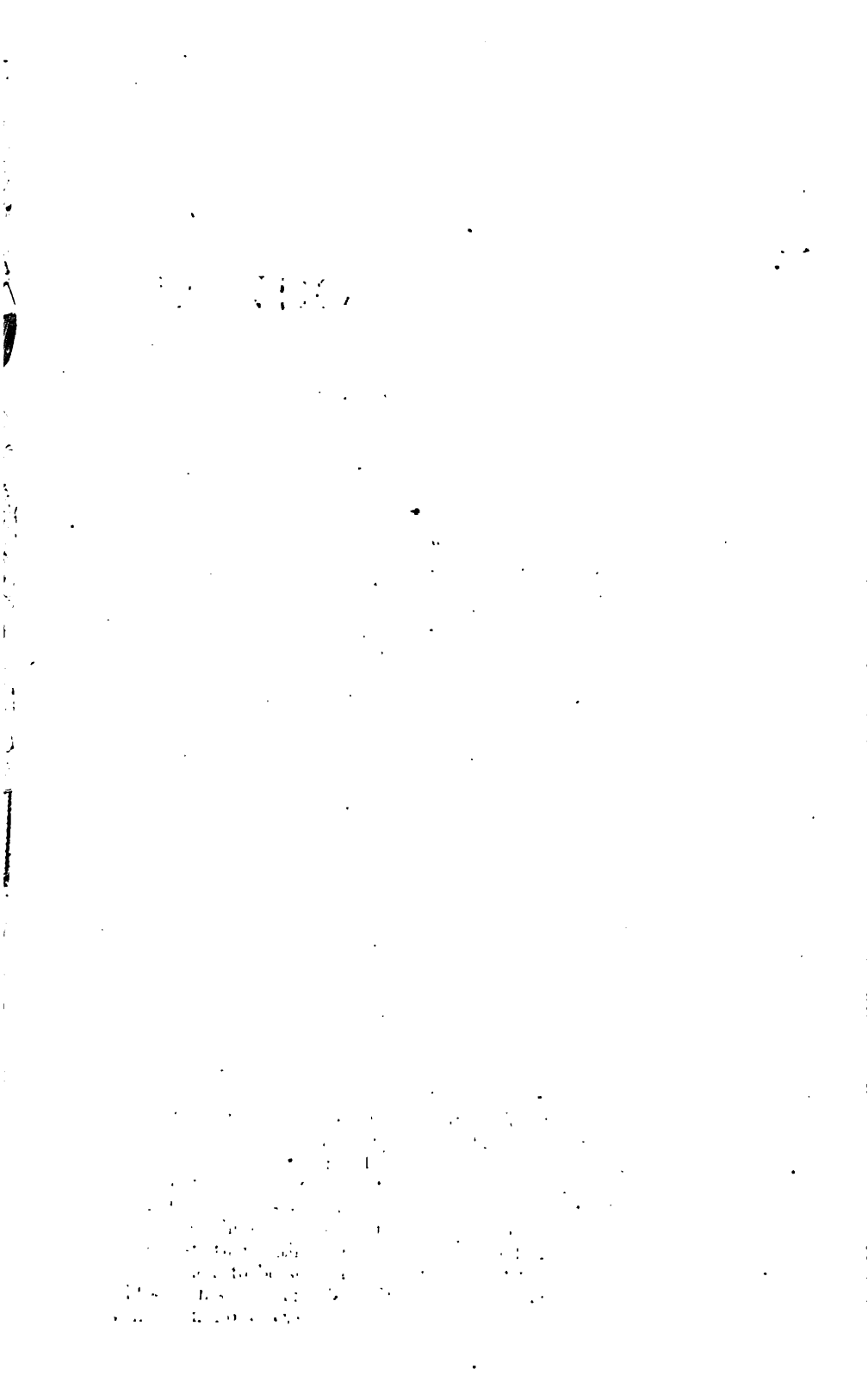
Nadia could not move, but she could see for him. He took her in his arms and went on towards the south-west of the province.

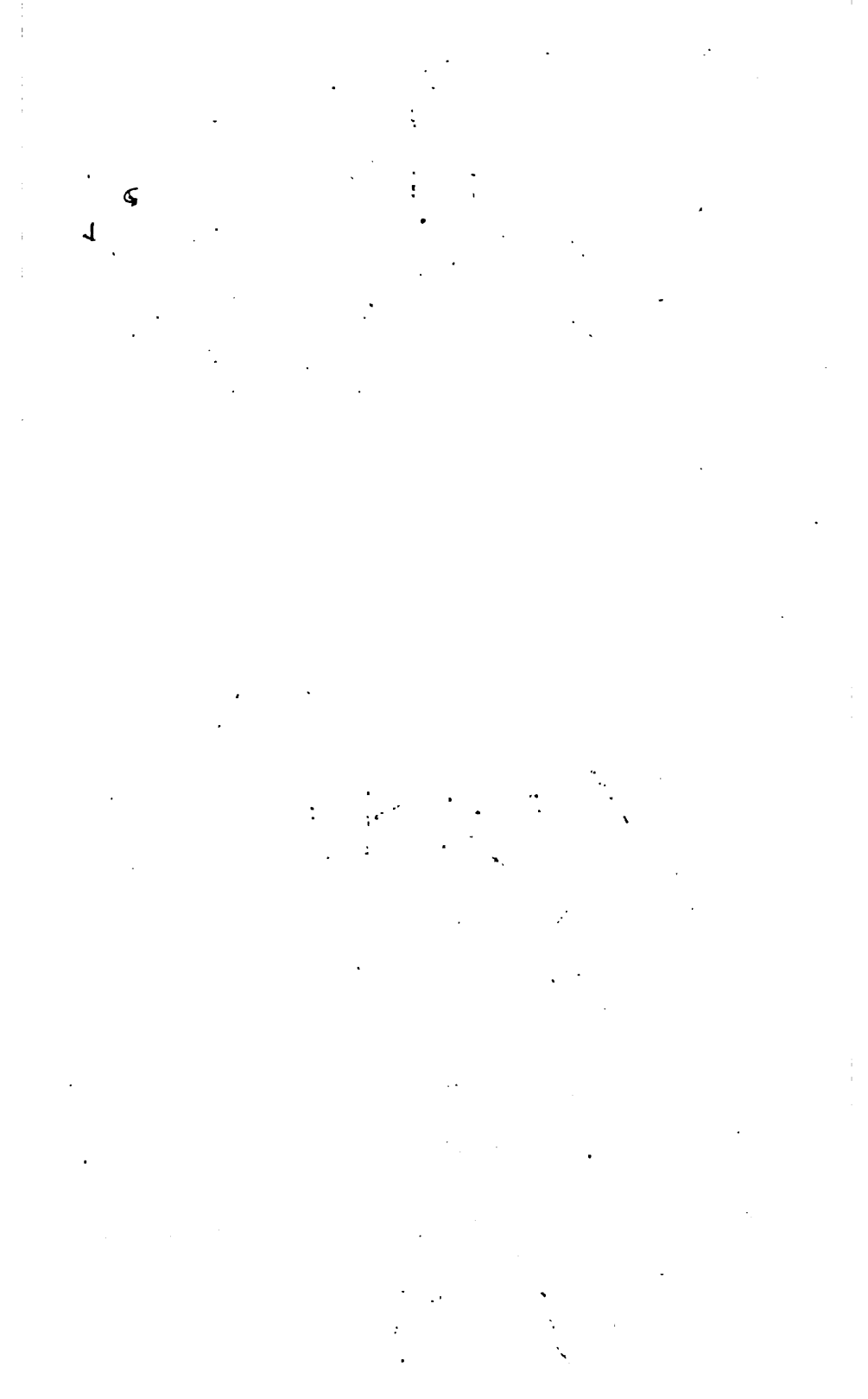
More than two hundred versts still remained to be traversed. How was the distance to be performed? Should they not succumb to such fatigue? On what were they to live on the way? By what superhuman energy were they to pass the slopes of the Sayansk mountains? Neither he nor Nadia could answer this.

And yet, twelve days after, on the 2d of October, at six o'clock in the evening, a wide sheet of water lay at Michael Strogoff's feet.

It was Lake Baikal.

(To be continued.)





LONDON SOCIETY.

APRIL 1877.

THE STORY OF AN APRIL DAY.

I.

FAIR shone the morning of the second day of April. The sunlight glistened in every separate dewdrop on the lawn outside Mrs. Moore's breakfast-room windows. Goldenly glowed the great round bosses of crocus, and the light blazed through the coloured lamps of the tulips, all the while that meek violets and primroses were equally doing homage to the advent of spring, after their own sweet and unobtrusive manner. From the belt of trees and shrubs that marked the boundary between garden and meadow sounded a ceaseless succession of warblings, being the praiseful utterances of sundry blackbirds and thrushes, who, more polite or more amiably appreciative of the claims of rival artists than musicians without feathers are sometimes known to be, were careful not to interrupt or interfere with one another's performances by any irregular conversation; but gave attentive hearing, each to each, and only in his own proper turn took up the theme again, to do his best therewith. Every now and then, to be sure, a lark would send his song, and himself

with it, far into the sky, regardless of everything in the world, his own personality included; and seemingly intent to desperation on flying fairly out of it, up, up to that wondrous centre of life and light and glory, that looked so especially accessible that morning. But then the lark belongs to no Academy, and, like some human poets, may be supposed unnaturally indifferent to public approbation — fatally obtuse to general criticism. *He* sings with reckless abandonment of all mundane considerations, being utterly rapt in his own ecstasy of worship; and one can imagine the sentiments of reproachful pity and regret with which birds of better regulated minds probably regard their wilful and unorthodox brother.

All this is not so absolutely discursive as it may seem, for no one with ears to hear could possibly look out from Mrs. Moore's breakfast-room window on an April morning without attending to the music which was for ever going on in that little grove of trees aforesaid. Certainly Nina Moore could not; and, in fact, all this about the lark came into her head, together with a variety of

irrelevant matters, on this particular April morning, as she stood twisting a tender sprig of sweet-brier in her fingers, while her eyes wandered meditatively around the pretty floral domain without.

Mrs. Moore, already seated before the urn, was reading the letters and notes she had found beside her plate.

'Dear me!' she cried out to her daughter, 'Sir Frederick can't come to-day. How vexatious!' And the next minute she added, in a lower tone, half to herself, 'Strange, too.' Then again, a little fractiously, she raised her voice: 'Do you hear, Nina? Here is a note from Sir Frederick saying he is compelled to leave the Darrells', and go up to London this morning, so that he cannot join us in our excursion to Waveleigh Woods.'

'Can't he, really?' Nina said, in a tone that scarcely implied much regret. However, she presently added, 'Poor man! What a dismal exchange! Instead of Waveleigh Woods on this ideal spring morning, London pavements and a smoky fog. I'm sorry for him.'

'He doesn't say when he expects to return, either,' pursued Mrs. Moore reflectively; 'but no doubt he will hurry back as soon as he can. We had better put off our drive for a day or two, at any rate.'

Nina turned round vivaciously enough at this.

'O, you don't mean it, dear, with sunshine like this smiling you in the face. Why, if you will only just look out for a minute! Here's a day so lovely that it really *must* have taken a whole year to make it as perfect, so that it is useless to expect such another for at least twelve months to come. And Waveleigh, of all places in this world, should be

seen on such a day of days. Put off our excursion? No, you never could have the heart to do it, mother dear.'

'You are too impetuous, Nina,' Mrs. Moore said coldly; 'you speak in such an exaggerated way. Come, breakfast waits.'

The rebuked daughter left her window, and sat down very soberly. No remarks were exchanged for some minutes. The thrush's persistent echo of himself, the blackbird's variously tender improvisations, the lark's occasional carol, all went on outside, and reached the ears and the heart of one of the inmates of the room, at least. And the soft spring clouds floated over the sky, and met and parted again, and sailed away towards the gray horizon at the north-east; and the sunshine came through them in bursts and gushes of radiance that would not have been half so beautiful without those intervals of tender shadow. But how differently to different intelligences appear the same phenomena!

'I don't know what you mean by a fine day, Nina,' her mother broke the silence by saying. 'To me it looks an extremely doubtful morning. The sky is all over clouds, and there is a heavy mass over Ide Hill that is ominous of storm, to my thinking.'

'Only the wind is blowing directly *towards* that bank of cloud, mamma, not from it. It is a south-west wind, you know.'

'Exactly; the very quarter from which we must expect rain. It will be a wet afternoon, take my word for it.'

'Indeed, indeed, mother, the morning is beyond suspicion. Showers must always be looked for in this beloved capricious month; but showers will only make everything look ten times lovelier directly afterwards. O,

don't say we are to be disappointed of our treat! Let us go to Waveleigh, please, please, PLEASE!

Nina began calmly enough, but her eagerness carried her away, as we may see, before she had done. She was an enthusiastic young person, and conventional restraints never had power over her for long together. Now she left her seat, crouched down beside her mother, threw her arms round that lady's neck, and looked into her face with appealing eyes and a coaxing smile, that might well have been supposed irresistible. But somehow Mrs. Moore was wonderfully obtuse to these innocent allurements on this particular occasion.

'Do be sensible; remember you are not a child, Nina,' she said, shaking her cap-strings and her flounces, bending her brows, and ruffling her feathers generally, and altogether looking as severe as was practicable when that bright sweet face was within two inches of her own. 'You really vex me with your babyish ways, when I want you to be serious and reasonable. *On ne rit pas toujours*. And why in the world have you set your heart on going to these woods to-day? We have seen them often enough, and so have the Darrells. It was Sir Frederick who especially wanted to go; and now he can't be with us, I must say it seems to me quite needless to carry out the plan.'

'Very well, mamma,' Nina responded, after a pause. She was subdued now, evidently. She resumed her seat, and all the radiance left her face. If her temper had been less perfect, she would have looked, and felt, sullen; but she did not know how to achieve either that emotion or its expression, and so she only looked pa-

thetic, and rather like a child who is quivering on the verge of tears.

There was to be no peace or satisfaction for poor Mrs. Moore, however, on this unlucky morning. This pathetic look made her quite uncomfortable, for she loved her only child tenderly; and we may rest assured that no consideration but 'the child's own good' would have tempted her to thwart her. But then they did not always agree as to what constituted that abstract 'good,' as was natural perhaps, seeing that the mother was fifty, and had known much worldly trouble and difficulty in her early days of married life; whereas Nina was not much past twenty, and ever since she could remember had lived in perfect ease and affluence, her poor father's rich East Indian brother having left her heiress to twenty thousand pounds when she was only three years old.

Now, for the last two or three weeks, the 'good' that the anxious mother had been bent on attaining for her darling was nothing less than a husband, an enviable position in society, and the pretty title of Lady Allonby. It was a pretty title, and Mrs. Moore exulted in anticipation over the sound, as expressing the individuality of her sweet Nina; being quite persuaded in her own mind that such would be her style and title before another year was over. Let it be well understood that she was far from deliberately ignoring other considerations with regard to this destined husband for her daughter. His rank, she frequently assured herself, would have offered no temptations had Sir Frederick Allonby been less than the man of character, intelligence, and culture which she considered him. And although he was double little Nina's age, his

appearance even was not at all against him, Mrs. Moore was persuaded; for was he not a handsome, still young-looking man of forty-five, with all those advantages of grace of manner and perfect *savoir faire* that experience of good society gives to a man of that age? No girl could resist the compliment of finding herself the final choice of such a distinguished and attractive person; no girl could fail to reciprocate and be made happy by the devotion of this admirable and delightful baronet. All this was Mrs. Moore's view of the matter. If she had taken any pains to discover her daughter's, she would have been startled by the contrast. To Nina Sir Frederick appeared a mere *blasé* man of fashion, worldly, selfish, and shallow. She found nothing to interest her in his society; and his 'attentions,' especially during the last week or two, had caused her more annoyance than she found it easy to endure with patience and courtesy. For, in fact, it was evident to all how much he was attracted—as well he might be—by this young girl, who was as fair as though she were penniless, while possessing fortune enough to justify her in being 'plain.' Nothing but Nina's own shyness, her mother felt convinced, had held him back thus long; and that very shyness was probably significant of dawning regard, the lady reasoned to herself. For she was quite determined to believe in her own theory, and, like other theorists, was inclined to adapt all the evidences so as to fit into her own speculations. To every sign and token tending to contravene her views she was, of course, blind and deaf. As, for instance, she could never see that Nina, who was apt to become very listless towards the end of

an evening spent at the Darrells', with their illustrious guest Sir Frederick assiduously devoted to her service and amusement, would be roused into life—beaming, flushing, tremulous life—if Edward Darrell (young barrister, spending a month for quiet study with the uncle and aunt who had brought him up from boyhood) happened to come in for half an hour after poring over his books all day—those dreary books in which, somehow, he had been more than ever absorbed of late. Also, Mrs. Moore either did not observe, or did not give the matter a second thought, that on several occasions within these past few eventful weeks, when riding or driving parties had been made that included Sir Frederick, Nina had tried in every possible way to avoid his particular escort or companionship; whereas, when Edward Darrell had once or twice accompanied them, she had not in the least objected to *his* instructions in the art of managing her playfully-disposed mare, and had shown no unwillingness to go home a longer way round that *he* proposed to show them. Very unwilling was the mother to recognise the fact that all through the last week, when the baronet's attentions were becoming more manifest, but when, at the same time, Edward Darrell had professed himself too deeply engrossed in study to spare time for joining any riding or walking parties, Nina had been very indifferent to all schemes of the kind, and had even tried, more than once, to avoid being included in them; although on this particular day, when, for a wonder, Sir Frederick had actually pleaded an excuse and was to absent himself, she was suddenly and especially eager to go to these Waveleigh Woods.

Without acknowledging to herself the full force and possible meaning of this latest symptom, Mrs. Moore was disturbed and provoked at the general state of things, which seemed to threaten the prosperity of her cherished plans, and she had shown her annoyance in the way we have seen. Nina's shadowed face, however, touched her heart and made her feel compunctious and inclined to relent. She was just saying, 'Well, dear, if you like, we'll ask the Darrells what *they* think about it. If they care to go, I've no objection. You shall do as you please.'

On the word, and while Nina's beaming face was expressing beforehand the delighted gratitude her voice would set to music in another instant, the door opened, and the servant came in with a note for Mrs. Moore. 'It is from Mrs. Darrell,' she remarked, while opening it. 'I daresay about this very question.'

And she read it only half aloud, with interpolated comments, as follows:

'My dear Friend'—['Dear me! why this *empressement*, I wonder? I was only "dear Mrs. Moore" last week!']—'We hope that you will still feel disposed to go to Waveleigh to-day.' ['And why should we *not*?'] muttered the lady, inconsistently enough, with a sudden vexed flush rising hotly to her cheek; 'that is,' she added, with an after-thought, 'if the weather's to be trusted, of course.' 'It is such a delicious morning, that I should greatly like to go, if only you and dear Nina will go too; and let us all, old friends as we are—['What in the world makes her so sentimental to-day?']—'enjoy the lovely woods together. My husband has some business which will detain him at home, but

Edward is going to leave his books and give himself a holiday. We want you also to consent to return home with us, to dine and spend the evening. We shall be only our own party. Do say "yes" to all this, if possible, and we will meet, as agreed, at your gates, by ten o'clock.

'Always, believe me, yours attached,

'HENRIETTA DARRELL.

'Wednesday, April 2d.'

'A most extraordinary fuss about nothing, I must say!' concluded Mrs. Moore, as she refolded the letter, with the flush still burning in her face. 'One would suppose she thought—However, it's no matter. Nina, you'd better run out and say "yes" to the servant who brought this.' And while Nina flew to obey, her mother opened the note again and re-read it, with a cloud of unpleased perplexity on her ample brow.

'What can she mean? She never *could* suppose that I or Nina feel the slightest disap— or, indeed, any feeling but indifference at his departure. Surely she could not entertain such an idea. Well, she will soon see. Come, Nina,' as the girl reëntered, blithe and radiant, 'the day looks more promising than I thought; and you'll have your wish, after all.'

II.

It was a wonderful day for light and colour. The tender verdure of the grass, the keener green of the young corn, the emerald brightness of the fresh shoots of the hedge-rows, and the delicate paleness of the yet half-closed buds of beech,—every item in the infinite variety of early spring

leafage, in a word, was transfigured into even a higher beauty by the subtly-sweet influence of shadow and shine that was the exquisite accompaniment to all the visible music of the scene. And then, the distant hills ! How softly tinted they were, as if in harmonious response to the faintly coloured clouds that were floating and melting into each other, all over the sunny sky ! Like another cloud of a different character appeared the distant woods — the hanging woods of Waveleigh, that shadowed the western slopes of these hills ; but only with a shadow that to-day was every now and again enlightened by a myriad lucent points of budding foliage, that seemed to start into life every time the sunlight spoke to them, and *would* be answered.

It had been planned that Mrs. Moore and Nina should take Mrs. Darrell in their phaeton, while Edward rode on horseback ; and in this order, therefore, they made the pleasant two hours' journey to the old-fashioned inn at the village of Waveleigh, where it was the custom, on excursions of this kind, to alight, take refreshment, and then proceed on foot to the woods. And what an enchanted world it was through which they passed that morning — at least to two of the little party ! On they went, Edward Darrell keeping as close to the carriage as if he had been the most sober minded of riders, instead of, as he actually was, as fearless a young horseman as ever rode across country. And when the pace of the ardent steeds that drew the phaeton moderated somewhat, by reason of a 'stiffish' hill to ascend or descend, the outrider would come to one side of the carriage, and, while sharing in the talk that was going on, could steal a glance all to himself from Nina, who sat

in the *cadette's* place opposite the two matrons, and on whose fair cheeks perpetually flickered an April light that was truly in keeping with the spirit of the day. Did it occur to her to wonder within herself *why* life seemed invested with such a new gladness on this special morning ? Did she persist in attributing it all to the loveliness of the scene and the time ? or was she less gifted with powers of self-deception, and did she, therefore, recognise in the recesses of her own innocent heart that she felt happier than she had felt for three weeks past, just because her old friend Edward was 'himself again,' and not cold, reserved, almost distant, as he had been during that space of time ? Indeed, he was somewhat *more* than his own old self. Nina had never before met such a look from his brown eyes as once or twice this morning made her own blue ones to drop so precipitately, and her heart to beat with strange sweet agitation and bewilderment. And then, too, *he* seemed so happy ; or if the ardent eagerness of his whole manner and bearing was rather too suggestive of unrest for 'happy' to be the fitting word, there was something in his look that irresistibly gave the idea of a weight lifted from the heart, a cloud passed away from the 'mind's eye,' and the reactionary freedom and relief that naturally attend on relaxation of mental tension. It would have made Nina glad at any time to see one she cared for look so buoyantly, healthfully joyous as Edward seemed this morning ; and it was quite an established fact that she *did* 'care for' him. She had known him since she was a child of ten years old, and he a college youth of seventeen ; and he had been her embodiment of masculine wis-

dom, intellect, and general superiority from that time to the present. No wonder, therefore, that she had felt a sense of dreary dissatisfaction while that *quasi* estrangement (which no one noticed, and she herself only instinctively recognised) had subsisted between them. No wonder that life was brighter and sweeter to her now that he was once more her friend.

And so it *was* an enchanted world; and the homely little inn where they stopped was an Arcadian cottage, and the lunch (although bread-and-butter, biscuits, and sherry were simply set down in the bill) was celestial in its nature and ambrosial and nectarine in its materials.

And if all this was the case, what shall be said of the walk through the woods after the said repast? The party of four sauntered forth together, the three ladies and their cavalier side by side. By insensible degrees, however, this order of progression was altered. Nina was entreated to look at certain primroses, small ferns, and violets which had clustered together lovingly about the roots of one specially fair-stemmed beech; and then presently he tempted her to linger and listen to the wood-pigeon's tender music, that came to them so softly and tremulously through the spring silence. And so it befell that at the next bend in the wood path the elder ladies, busily talking, were out of sight, and these two young people were virtually alone in their paradise.

And Edward was saying,

'Do you suppose Eden was more beautiful than this? And don't you think it must always have been this particular season there?'

And he looked round with an expression of praise and love that grew and grew in his eyes, till it

finally culminated as they rested on Nina's sweet drooped face. She *felt* the gaze she did not venture to meet, and the colour came and went upon her cheek. Again the unwonted sense of embarrassment oppressed her strangely. She walked on rapidly, hardly knowing she did so, until she was struck almost motionless with the earnestly uttered words—

'Nina, you are not trying to escape listening to what I *must* say?'

III.

MEANWHILE the two matrons continued their equable progress through the wood. Mrs. Moore was glad of the opportunity for a little quiet chat with her friend. She indeed wished for an explanation of what had seemed to her rather 'odd' in the note of that morning, yet she felt sufficiently self-conscious not to be able frankly to ask for it. Instead, she began by remarking, in the most careless manner in the world,

'The day has turned out so brilliantly after all, I quite regret Sir Frederick's absence. He would have seen Waveleigh to advantage.'

Mrs. Darrell offered no reply. This, again, was certainly curious. Perplexing also. Mrs. Moore hardly knew what to say next. However, she went on, with something about the weather and the scenery, in the same indifferent tone, till, chancing to turn her eyes towards her silent companion, she was completely startled by the pained pathetic expression in her kind face. Her own warm feelings had their way then, at once overbearing all other considerations.

'Dear Mrs. Darrell, is anything

wrong?' she said affectionately. 'You look troubled.'

'I *am* troubled—much troubled. And now we are alone together, I don't know how to keep it to myself any longer,' began the astounding reply. 'Though I am afraid you wish me to take no notice and behave as usual—I—I really can't. I *must* speak; I must assure you—remind you—of our long and intimate friendship, of our earnest sympathy, our deep respect. We love you and Nina enough to feel any misfortune of yours as if it were our own. I don't think we ever before knew *how* dear you both are to us.' And the warm-hearted speaker concluded with tears in her blue eyes, as she took Mrs. Moore's hands and pressed them lovingly in her own.

Mrs. Moore's face was a study of complicated and contending expression. Astonishment, alarm, bewilderment, vexation, were all represented by turns. There was no room for any more tender appreciation of the proffered sympathy as yet. Gently she drew her hands from Mrs. Darrell's clasp, while saying rather tremulously,

'I am not aware of any misfortune having newly happened to us. Pray explain fully what you are thinking of.'

'You do not know? Is it possible that *you* should be the last to hear of your own loss?'

'Loss! What loss? Poor Mrs. Moore might well be forgiven on this occasion for repeating the other's words thus flagrantly. She was thoroughly alarmed now, and most anxious to hear more.

'There was a long account in the papers yesterday of the complete collapse of that great Indian Mining Company. Do you not know that it has suddenly disastrously failed? Their bonds are so

much waste paper. And Nina's fortune—'

'All Nina's money is safely invested in English Consols,' rapidly inserted Mrs. Moore. 'What in the world made you think otherwise? Good heavens, how you have startled me!' she added, heaving a deep sigh of relief.

As for poor Mrs. Darrell, her faded face lit up as with the glow of her long-past youth, and a sort of inarticulate cry escaped her that was equally unelderly and unlike her quiet characteristic self.

'It is all right, then? You have really lost nothing? Dear—dear me! How thankful I am! How delighted Thomas will be! English Consols? What a blessing!'

These were the good lady's first intelligible utterances, while she caught hold of Mrs. Moore's hands again, and squeezed them as warmly for rejoicing as before she had done for condolence. And the hands were not drawn away this time, but yielded kindly and even responsively to the demonstration, though the face belonging to them still looked rather serious and preoccupied.

'Pray tell me how this misapprehension arose,' Nina's mother gently asked. 'I cannot at all understand it. What made you suppose my daughter's fortune was still invested in India?'

'It seemed natural enough—it never occurred to me to disbelieve it,' was the simple answer.

'But who told you it was so?'

'Why, Sir Frederick.' At the name Mrs. Moore slightly winced, as at the reception of a half-expected pang. 'Sir Frederick more than once spoke of it, and asked if we knew the nature of the investment.'

'He must have done us the honour of taking great interest in our affairs,' observed Mrs. Moore,

with lofty frigidity, though her cheeks burned redly as she spoke. 'It would almost seem as if he had made himself acquainted with the terms of the will by which Daniel Moore left Nina his heiress. The bulk of his property *did* then consist in these shares. But the trustees thought it better gradually to sell out and invest in English securities, and the last thousands were transferred there only a year ago.'

'How fortunate! And young Paget didn't know, I suppose?' said Mrs. Darrell.

'What about young Paget? What has he to do with it?'

'Why, it was he who met my husband and Sir Frederick yesterday in the High-street, and told them of this complete break up of the mines, and the disastrous thing it was for all concerned in them.'

'Young Paget!' Mrs. Moore repeated, bewildered, 'the son of our solicitor! He must know better. Of all people in this neighbourhood the Pagets are best acquainted with our affairs.'

'So we thought; and when Thomas told me, and we were grieving about it, it never occurred to me there could be any mistake.'

'Mr. Paget has conducted the whole business all along. It seems scarcely possible his son should be ignorant. Are you *sure* this extraordinary piece of news came from young Paget?'

'Quite sure. Thomas said he really seemed quite grave and serious, for once. You know he is such a hare-brained careless young fellow usually.'

'O, I know. He would surely never dare—' began Mrs. Moore meditatively, but was interrupted by the large splashing drops, initiative of a sharp shower.

Both ladies were fain to betake

themselves at once to the shelter afforded by an adjacent stack of fagots, to the lee side whereof they hurried with much rustle and fluster. And then Mrs. Darrell began to fidget, after her manner, about the two young people. Where *could* they be? She had thought they were close behind. She hoped dear Nina would not get wet. To all which anxiety Mrs. Moore responded indifferently and half absently, her thoughts being still bent in another direction.

'It's only a shower. They will be here presently,' she said once or twice, and irrelevantly went on to the inquiry, 'And your guest left you this morning, then? A sudden departure, was it not?'

'Yes; he had a letter by the early post calling him to town. He said nothing about coming back,' pursued Mrs. Darrell; 'and to tell the truth, neither did we. For old acquaintance' sake, Thomas invited him down, and when he seemed so charmed with the neighbourhood of course we asked him to stay. But, hospitality apart, we are not sorry he is gone. He doesn't altogether suit us quiet folks.'

Mrs. Moore made no answer. Her maternal heart was beating high with something that was not all indignation, because it was partly scorn. She forgot she was not alone; involuntarily she stamped her foot on the ground, and said almost audibly,

'He is well discovered in time! No fortune-hunter shall ever have my Nina.'

'What did you say?' gently inquired her companion, thereby restoring her to the full consciousness of where she was and with whom.

And now the child's passion of the spring shower was over, and a rain of sunbeams instead was falling from the lucent sky; and all

the budding greenery of the wood gleamed and sparkled with a lovelier joy than ever—a celestial jewel for every tear. The tenderest breeze came lovingly over the young leaves, feeling and sounding like the touch and voice of a mother that caresses and croons about her babe before she takes it into her arms. And the birds began to sing anew, for was not the world freshly beautiful and happy for them also? and is it not the privilege of birds straightway to give out as praise what they take in as joy?

And when presently Edward and Nina appeared, coming towards them under the arching boughs that every here and there shone rainbow-like about them, there was something in their aspect so pathetically in keeping with the feeling of the time, that Mrs. Moore, while rapidly realising this final and unlooked-for *éclaircissement* which was to crown the surprises of the day, was utterly unable to summon one atom of prudent worldly common sense to her aid, but behaved like any ordinary weak-minded romantic mother who had never entertained ambitious projects for her daughter's 'establishment' in her life.

Nina fled to her and hid her face, all tears and sunshine at the same moment, like Nature's own. And Edward stood beside her, and bent his steadfast beseeching eyes on the mother. Nina whispered,

'O mamma, I am so happy!' and then could not even whisper any more. While he made his appeal in few words,

'She says only *you* can give her to me. Will you?'

IV.

Now it is very possible—for is not human nature weak and liable to such recalcitrance from its higher and nobler attitudes!—that when the first flush of enthusiasm had faded, Mrs. Moore may have experienced some feelings of regret, of half-disappointment, of 'wishing it had been otherwise,' with regard to the fateful events of that April afternoon. But to do her justice, Nina's mother was not really intended for a worldly woman; she was too warm of heart and too generous ever to attain proficiency in that line, and her better self was seldom torpid for long together. And so, though she was keenly aware that Nina *was* young as well as lovely and well endowed, and might have made a more brilliant alliance, she also allowed herself to see that Edward Darrell was an excellent young man, of unusual talent and promise, who had proved the disinterested nature of his affection for her daughter by never divulging it until he believed her to have lost her fortune. Whereas another gentleman, whom Mrs. Moore had regarded favourably as a probable son-in-law, had—in fact, had *not* shown himself similarly free from mercenary considerations.

As for Edward himself, his feelings may be supposed to have been of a somewhat complicated nature, when he was made to understand that he had actually done what he had determined with all his might not to do—while he remained briefless, at least—that is to say, he had asked Nina, the heiress, to be his wife! But was it possible for him to regret the delusion which had ended thus blissfully? When Nina at last comprehended the state of the case, she asked him very shyly if

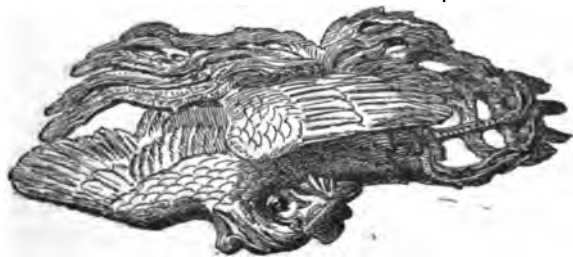
—if he repented. To which his reply was apparently conclusive, for she did not repeat her question.

And so they left the beautiful woods, all flooded with the serene level light of early evening, and the amber glow of the sunset met them as they drew near home.

Something else met them also—namely, a young man on horseback, who, having lifted his hat to the ladies in the carriage, detained Edward for a minute or two to make an explanation.

‘I say, I’m awfully sorry, upon my word I am, really,’ said young Paget, with a violent effort to get up a suitable expression of countenance. ‘And I want you to make Mrs. Moore and the Darrells understand how it occurred. I only meant to take in Sir Frederick, he’s such a precious prig; and besides, he tried once to pump me about this very matter of Miss Moore’s fortune, and I thought he was fair game, don’t you know. Of course I never supposed Mr. Darrell wouldn’t know better, on my honour; just tell him, will you? I thought he was going into

the joke when he looked so grave about it—I did indeed. And now I hear he’s angry. I say, do put in a good word for me, and don’t let them complain to my father. I shall get such a wiggling if they do. And, I say, you know, of course, I see now it was going too far, even considering the day, and all, and though I don’t care about Sir Frederick (won’t he just be savage when he finds it out?), I do care about your people; and so just tell them I’m awfully cut up about it, and never dreamed of playing a trick on *them*. I say, do speak up for me,’ again pleaded the culprit, fancying, and perhaps with reason, that he saw some signs of relenting in the carefully-maintained gravity of his listener’s face. ‘Tell them it’s my last exploit in this way. I’m going to turn over a new leaf, I am indeed. I shall leave all this kind of thing to the boys next year. And next time I see the baronet I’ll tell him that he has the honour of being the last of a long line of Jack Paget’s April fools. That’ll console him, perhaps.’



PRIVATE VIEWS.

If people were to call on Mr. Alfred Tennyson or Mr. Algernon Swinburne, and say they would like to be favoured with the sight of forthcoming poems; or drop in upon Mr. Anthony Trollope or Mr. Wilkie Collins, and request to be allowed to run over the proof-sheets of new novels, it would be considered a very strange thing. It would be accounted equally unreasonable if they were to express a wish to Mrs. Bancroft to have a special representation of a new play at her theatre before it was submitted to the general public. And yet this kind of thing among artists—that is to say, the painters in oil and water-colours, the sculptors and the engravers—is looked upon as quite a matter of course. On certain days prior to the time of reception of works of art for the exhibition of the Royal Academy the artist is compelled to receive visitors. It is true he may believe in the old adage that an Englishman's house is his castle, but he will find that he will be compelled to keep his portcullis up and his drawbridge down, he will be obliged to let people pass in and out without let or hindrance, if he would become popular. Every class of artist, from Sir Thomas Tonemdown, R.A., the popular portrait painter, to little Paul Pearlytint, who has just finished his first landscape, has annually to submit to the ordeal of a private view.

There are but very few who have the courage and the power to close their studios and go out of town on these show-days. There are probably not a dozen in

the whole profession who emphatically declare their pictures shall not be seen by the general crowd till they are shown at a public exhibition, and who resent the intrusion of a number of loungers of whom they know little, and for whom they care less. There is no exaggeration in stating that in some quarters this private view business has become little short of a nuisance, and in others it has assumed even a more serious aspect. A year or two ago it was whispered that one painter discovered, when his show was over, that several silver spoons were missing, and another found some portable property had, in a most mysterious manner, disappeared. Let us hope this report was not true, but it would certainly point to the advisability of allowing a few detectives craftily made up as art-critics, picture-dealers, patrons, or pre-Raphaelites, on these occasions, to go the round of the studios.

It is very extraordinary to find the number of people who will take the greatest trouble, and go through a large amount of inconvenience, to catch a casual glimpse of half an artist's picture in an overcrowded room, whereas, if they were only content to wait for a few weeks, they would be able, on payment of a shilling, to see it in comparative quiet and double the enjoyment in Burlington House. Any one who thoroughly and honestly does the round of the studios at the beginning of April has most assuredly no easy task. If he does not drive himself—that is to say, if he does not drive his

own or somebody else's horses, or is driven in his own or somebody else's carriage, for of course no one ever thinks of putting a bit and bridle in his own mouth, and putting himself between the shafts—he will have to expend a small fortune in cab-hire. If he feels marvellously energetic and elects to walk, he will most likely wear out half a dozen pairs of boots, lose his temper, get so splashed with mud that his own mother would not know him, and probably have to rest for a fortnight afterwards.

Painters, though proverbially of a somewhat irritable and jealous temperament, are notably gregarious. You rarely find an artist living anywhere without some of his brethren being within hailing distance. You may discover these little oases of the art-world dotted about in various parts of London, but these islands are so scattered, and in many cases so far apart, that if you wish to explore thoroughly the art-archipelago of London, you will most assuredly find it no easy task. There is the old painters' quarter, which is bounded on the east by Gower-street, on the west by Portland-place, on the north by Euston-road, and on the south by Oxford-street. What excellent pictures have been painted, what great painters have lived, in this quarter! Some day I will write the history of this quaint little province. Was there not a life academy in Margaret-street, and a well-renowned artists' society in Clipston-street? Did not Mr. Cary have a school of art in Bloomsbury-street, and did not Mr. J. M. Leigh train up a number of art-children in the way they should go in Newman-street? Does not the 'Langham' still sketch skilfully, and does not the 'Hogarth' still hold its merry

meetings within the boundaries of this pleasant land? Shade of J. J., laughing spirit of careless Clive Newcome, and remembrance of the good old Colonel, how ye hang about the ancient squares and dingy streets of this neighbourhood! Cannot I show you the identical house in Fitzroy-square where James Binnie at one time resided, point out to you where the great Alfred Smee, R.A., lived in Howland-street, or take you to the very spot where once the immortal Gandiah instilled into his disciples the first principles of 'igh art'? The old Bohemian flavour of the artist-world still hangs about this neighbourhood.

When painters first congregated in this quarter, art was not such a good thing as it is in the present day. Its professors were thought to be rather wild, a good many people considered them eccentric, and everybody knew them to be impecunious. Art in those days flourished not. It smoked short clay pipes, it disdained not to drink out of the pewter, it occasionally dined at an eating-house, it wore long hair and a ragged velvet jacket, and it was not unacquainted with certain humbler scions of the great Attenborough family. Nevertheless it lived a chirpy easy-going sort of life. It painted 'pot-boilers.' It sometimes made money, sometimes fame; occasionally both; generally neither. It is very different nowadays, I think to myself when I go to a private view in one of the good old mansions of this quarter. These houses are, after all, the very places for artists; the rooms are lofty and well built. They have many of them elaborately sculptured mantel-pieces and curiously decorated ceilings; they have broad stone staircases with twisted balusters;

they have tall windows and massive doors. Many of these houses have been in the occupation of artists from time immemorial. Sitting in one of those grand old rooms in a chair that once belonged to Sir Joshua Reynolds, the other evening, I bethought me what a history might be written about one of these houses.

But if you go a private-viewing, it will not do for you to moon in one quarter all day long, I can tell you, so we had better move on to the St. John's-wood district. Here we find the painter affects quite a different kind of mansion. There is no remnant of gloom or suspicion of Bohemianism hereabouts. The houses are mostly of moderate size, with a large studio attached. Frequently they are surrounded by walls, so that they are altogether screened from public gaze. Conservatories, little gardens gay with flowers, sometimes a couple of chubby children on the lawn, or a perambulator beneath the verandah, a fleecy shawl in the lobby, a bit of unfinished embroidery on the table, lead you to imagine that the artist is, as the saying is—the saying, however, is not always true—‘a happy man.’ However, be that as it may—you and I are only invited to look at the pictures, and not to pry into private affairs which do not concern us—there is an unmistakable impress of feminine influence in the cluster of studios in this neighbourhood. There is a brightness, a light, and an air about them that you cannot mistake.

There are not many very large studios in this quarter. I could, however, point out one of enormous dimensions, lined with ancient panelling and tapestry, and with a most elaborately carved mantelpiece, where gigantic figures of Moses and Aaron keep watch

and ward over quaint old fire-dogs. This studio is crammed with furniture of a bygone age, with choice armour, with curious *bric-à-brac*, and valuable works of art. There is the subdued tone of an ancient picture about it, and there is none of the garish glitter that some modern art-decorators—who think themselves so vastly clever—will persist in giving to rooms of the present day. Sitting in his studio, and quietly smoking a cigarette, and watching the painter at work upon his latest picture, one could almost fancy that one was in the snug corner of a Venetian palace, and half expect to hear the splash of the gondola and the ‘Ah-ye!’ of the gondolier in the water-street; whereas, if you venture outside, you will be quickly reminded you are within hail of the Bank of England by the passing Atlas omnibus, and, though the road just now may be a tolerably good imitation of a water-street, the nearest approach to a gondola will be a hansom cab, of which you can find any quantity you please, ready to drive you whithersoever you list, only just round the corner.

If you wish to see large studios, if you desire to visit palatial painting-rooms, you will have to go to Kensington. Here you will find them of every form and of indescribable variety. Before Kensington was so built over, in the pre-stucco period, there were still more curious artistic homes than exist in the present day. There were studios approached by avenues, there were *ateliers* hidden in gardens, and painters' residences looking like ancient manor-houses overshadowed by trees. As land became more valuable many of these have disappeared, and upstart rows of highly-rented houses, with nothing to distinguish one

from the other but the numeral on the front door, now occupy the gardens of what were once some of the pleasantest residences about London. Notwithstanding all this, you will find about Kensington, Holland-park, Hammersmith, and Campden-hill a number of palatial painting-rooms which will well repay your inspection. You will find studios belonging to animal painters, with paddocks and stables and every arrangement for the accurate study of their models.

You will see studios of every variety of decoration, and you will wonder where all the choice furniture, valuable china, and exquisite works of art can come from. Indeed in many cases the casket is so elaborate, that in some cases it is almost as well worth seeing as the jewel within it—in many cases it is more so. People who come to see the picture remain to look at the rooms. Not a few people go away saying, 'What a lovely studio that is of Scumbleton's!' but if you ask them what pictures Scumbleton had on view, the chances are they would not be able to tell anything at all about them. If I were a painter, and people insisted upon seeing my pictures before they were exhibited at the Royal Academy, they should see them in a plain room hung with sober drapery, and I would let them see nothing else. I am convinced it is the passion of the outside world for getting into houses where they would not otherwise have the entry that causes the crowd at these private views to become more numerous and unmanageable every year.

Of course the pertinacious private viewer will not have finished his work even when he has exhausted the districts of Soho, St. John's-wood, and Kensington. He will discover plenty to repay a pil-

grimage in Camden-town, in Bayswater, in Fulham, in Chelsea, in Chiswick, and in Hampstead. Studios often exist in most unlikely quarters. I know an artist who has one in the very centre of the garden of a fashionable square, and I used to know one who had a quaint *atelier* in the narrowest and noisiest part of the Strand, and another whose painting-room was a snug little place in the very heart of the Bank of England. Such places, however, are not to be discovered by the uninitiated; and as there are, as a rule, only a couple of days when pictures are on view to the general public, even the most energetic sight-seer, though he be assisted by a brougham or an unknown quantity of hansom cabs, will scarcely be able to see the whole of the pictures that are on show.

Doubtless the visitors on these occasions are the most amusing part of the exhibition. It really is impossible to see the pictures satisfactorily; but if one desires to study character, there is little better opportunity for doing so than to take a seat quietly in the corner of a studio, or, better still, behind the large canvas, on the occasion of a private view. There is the fussy old lady, with three gushing daughters, who do not know the painter when they see him, who nearly shake hands with a model who has been put into his best clothes, and told off to make himself generally useful, which not infrequently ends in his getting in everybody's way, taking too much sherry before two o'clock, and having to be sent home in a cab. This fussy old lady is generally deaf, and has to be shouted at; she goes away with the haziest miscomprehension of the picture, saying in a shrill voice that the artist is a most agreeable young man, and she daresay is very cle-

ver, but she is no judge of such things. There is the merry inconsiderate man, who has no respect for the solemnity of the occasion. This creature laughs loudly, he is red of face, he slap-peth the artist on the back, and he calleth him old fellow. He tells long anecdotes, and stands with his back to the principal picture, as if it were a fire and diffused a considerable quantity of agreeable warmth and comfort. He frequently stands so long in this position, and talks so much, that art-enthusiasts are apt to wax wrathful with him. He, however, will not be put down; you never know when he is gone, and he is always turning up at most unexpected times and in most unlikely places.

Nobody hates this jovial little man more than the lady I shall call the art-prancer. The art-prancer is a caution. I do not like to say anything rude, but I have heard irreverent young men call her a 'gushing old girl.' In a studio she is, I must admit, somewhat of a nuisance; and the way in which she gambols and caracols in an atmosphere of art is certainly somewhat tiresome. She is generally tall, usually 'beaky,' she has a high-pitched voice, and reminds one of a human flamingo or an attenuated Venus. She has peculiar views about dress, which she considers æsthetic; other people, not so well informed, account hideous. She affects a somewhat blowy and faded appearance. There is a wildness about her hair, which she thinks artistic. Sensible girls would say it was simply untidy. There is a washed-out, unhealthy appearance about her, that reminds one of the worst form of early third-rate pre-Raphaelite pictures. She gazes at the pictures through a double gold eye-

glass, and talks the slang of the studio in a hard loud voice. Your art-prancer is usually a large-boned woman, a sort of woman you could not pet, and could never, by any possible chance, marry. If you get a lot of them together the result is terrible. I once saw three of them in a flutter of excitement at the Royal Academy, because Mr. Millais happened to pass through the room. They tapped one another on the shoulder; they winked and they nodded. They wrote 'Millais' on their catalogues; they shaped the name with their mouths and followed him reverently. All the time the great artist was sublimely unconscious of the fair enthusiasts who were following in his track. Notwithstanding her many faults, the art-prancer is one of the most faithful hero-worshippers you could wish to encounter.

The critical visitors are a terrible infliction; and I have an idea they are, to a certain extent, humbugs, or else why do they go through such a series of gymnastics when they look at a picture? They whirl their arms at it like windmills; they make horrible faces at it; they shut up one eye, and wink and leer at it in most demoniacal fashion. Then they hold out their hands at arm's length, and take sights at it over their thumbs; they look at it through their closed fists; they stoop down and scowl, and seem to be so incensed, that you expect they will hit the picture every moment. They are given to gaze absently, shake their heads solemnly, and walk backwards; the latter operation is very detrimental to the boots of inoffensive visitors, who like to look at a work of art without taking violent muscular exercise. You may possibly notice a well-dressed





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gentleman, who is much amused at the gambols of the critic, taking notes on the back of a card. You will probably see these embodied in an exhaustive article entitled 'Anticipations of the Royal Academy,' in to-morrow morning's *Daily Detonator*.

There are three pretty young girls; they might be ten, eleven, and twelve, but they all seem about the same age. What pictures they look, with their rosy cheeks, their large watchet eyes, and their rippling chestnut hair! Do you note their close-fitting, very short, gray-holland frocks, their black stockings, and frilled pantalettes? Do you see that the brown belt round the waist, with a silver clasp, is repeated by the brown shoes with tiny buckles? Do you observe that the black stockings are repeated by the dainty little black hat; and that the lace round the neck and wrists finds an echo in the frill at the knee? Do not you wonder to whom these three well-dressed little ladies can belong? There is a portly man with a bald head and aggressive gold eye-glass. He is a merchant from Cottonopolis, who buys pictures, not because he cares about them, but because he fancies it is 'the thing to do,' and knows it

to be a good investment. He thrusts himself forward, and evidently expects people will make way for him. It is refreshing to see how he is jostled about, and that the painter himself takes no notice whatever of his presence.

The painter is busy explaining his picture to a couple of pretty girls, who, though clever artists themselves, have no nonsense about æsthetic craze, nor a suspicion of the art-prancer about them. Here comes a bishop, looking so benign, that you would think he were about to pronounce a benediction on the entire company. Over there is one of the most charming actresses of modern times, with her husband, who is talking to an accomplished dramatist. Presently enters a well-known novelist and journalist, editor of the most popular and successful weekly of the period. Here they come in crowds. A few guardsmen, a couple of low comedians, an eminent scene-painter, one or two mysterious long-haired artists, quite of the olden time, a few M.P.'s, and a number of loungers. Really the room is getting so crowded, I think one ought not to stay any longer.

J. ASHBY-STERRY.



THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.

CHAPTER XIII.

A STORY.

WHEN Frank drove up to Les Sapinières in the morning, he met his sister and cousin in the avenue, and got out to walk with them. It was very pleasant to see little Marie's pale face lit up with welcoming smiles, though she would not allow that they had been at all dull without him. She did not forget to inquire at once for Johnny, and Frank described his adventure, which seemed to have had a decided touch of the ludicrous about it.

'I suppose I am not heroic, and don't understand the feeling,' he said; 'but I must say I should think twice before jumping into a millstream to pull out a little dog. I should flatter myself that my life was the more valuable of the two, and that my friends would think so.'

'What! You would not risk your life to save Peloton?' exclaimed Marie.

'Well, if you asked me. And yet I hope I should have strength of mind to appeal from Marie mad to Marie sane.'

'However,' said Agnes, 'I hope Johnny is none the worse for it; is he?'

'He ran all the way back to the château, and was going to change his clothes and have his breakfast. I don't suppose he grieves much over the accident. M. de Valmont talked of driving him over this afternoon, but I shall not be surprised if he stays where he is.'

'Johnny is a great favourite at Lauron,' said Marie.

'So it seems. And how have you been amusing yourselves?'

Well, Marie seemed to have been anxious that neither she nor Agnes should find the time hang heavy while the others were away. She had been in one of her liveliest moods, ready to talk, ask questions, tell stories, listen to descriptions of life in England, the sadness of which impressed her very deeply. In the afternoon she took her cousin into the village to pay a visit to *Sœur Lucie*, who was in great anxiety about 'cette pauvre femme Robert, the mother of little Anaïs. The poor woman seemed to be wasting away from pure grief and weariness of living, and Marie hurried back to send down soup and fruit, and anything else that could be provided on such short notice. Then she suggested that she and Agnes should go and fish; so off they went, and sat down on the emerald grass by the side of the little river, and threw their lines, talking away the whole time, not being very earnest in their occupation. The fish were twice as cunning as these careless anglers, and of course would not bite, not at all to Agnes's disappointment. Neither did Marie care much, and they soon wandered back to the house.

'It is too hot to walk about,' she decided. 'Shall we fetch books and sit here on the terrace?'

'Yes, if you like,' said Agnes. 'I wonder what my aunt is doing all this time?'

'She is watching them beat the walnut-trees in the allée de plaisance. She does not want us,' said Marie.

She went into the library, and brought out a large bound book, the *History of Sweden*, with which she sat down on the bench. Agnes fetched Victor de Laprade's *Perrette*, and sat down too. But there are afternoons when even the calm run of verse, telling a simple touching story of human life, seems to fall below what one wants. Agnes let the book lie idly on her knee, and leaned her head against the old white wall, in silent enjoyment of what the Easterns call *haysf*—bodily and mental peace; that state in which one gives oneself up to the 'sunshine and sweet air,' listening in passive content to what birds and streams and quivering leaves and blue sky have to say.

'What are you looking at, my little Agnes?' said Marie, after diligently reading two pages of her history.

'Nothing,' said Agnes, smiling at her. 'I was only thinking how lovely it all is.'

'Just the same as usual, isn't it? Only very hot, as hot as July. Do you see those clouds? Ah, we shall have a storm. I did not know what made me so restless. I have felt it coming on all day.'

The storm was quite enough to occupy Marie's mind for the rest of the evening. It did not exactly frighten her, but made her very miserable. She was vexed and disappointed as the hours passed on, and Auguste and the sportsmen did not return from Lauron. But Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, among all the flashing and roaring and pelting, took a more sensible view, and was very glad that they were wise enough to stay in shelter.

This morning the elements and Marie's nerves had both regained

their usual level. When breakfast was over, the party fell back into their old companionship.

Agnes walked off with her aunt to inspect the vines, and make arrangements for the vintage, while Frank and Marie sat down on the terrace steps and began a water-colour sketch of the view. She could not see the sense of her master's repeated washings, was tired of the trouble, and soon gave it up into his hands. Frank worked on slowly, while she sat and watched him. Peloton came and looked over his shoulder, and then trotted off in pursuit of his mistress.

There was a wonderful softness in the air that afternoon, a little mist in the meadows—the sky, clouds, and trees were less clear than usual; there was almost an English haze thinly veiling the distance. Marie thought her cousin was not in very good spirits, and tried to cheer him by laughing and talking. The fact was that Frank was beginning to regard things rather seriously, and to wonder where all this would end. There was Johnny making a thorough fool of himself about Mlle. de Valmont; and what was he himself doing? It would be too absurd if he really allowed himself to care for this graceful, thoroughbred, sweet-voiced little cousin, with her smiles at once bright and melancholy, and her soft eyes, which seemed to him, with all their innocence, to have something of what Victor Hugo calls the 'profondeur Parisienne.'

Some malicious spirit prompted Marie to be more than usually attractive that afternoon, and to say very gently, as she watched the trees growing and the blue sky expanding under Frank's hands,

'What is it, I wonder, that makes you English always so sad?'

'Sad!' repeated Frank, looking round at her.

'Yes—always sad and grave and solemn. Is it your climate? One would think, to look at you, that there was always some trouble weighing on you. When you are not talking, you look as if you could never smile again.'

'Are you personal? Is that my aspect?'

'Certainly. And I have not forgotten what you said one day, that in such a world as this it was impossible to be always merry. Now as to myself,' said Marie, picking up a little stone and throwing it into the middle of the geranium bed, 'I think it is a very good world, and those who live in it ought to be contented.'

'How can everybody be contented?'

'And why not?'

'Well, there is only a certain amount of happiness in the world—not enough for everybody. It constantly happens that two people set their hearts on the same thing. One wins, the other loses. The losing one must of course be discontented. I must teach you logic, my dear cousin.'

'You have taught me a great many things—almost enough, I think,' said Marie. 'But now you have wandered away from my subject. I was talking about English sadness. I believe it is your religion that makes you sad.'

'Not at all,' said Frank, smiling. 'Perhaps it would be well if it did. I will tell you what it is. Englishmen always want what they cannot have. Listen, and you shall hear the story of a friend of mine. He was in my regiment. He had some foreign relations. Germans they were.'

'Ah, how horrible!' said Marie, under her breath.

'Very; but in spite of their

nation they were charming people—noble, accomplished, everything one admires. There was a girl among them whom my friend had never seen, but different things united to make the idea of her most attractive. He had heard that she was very pretty; and he had always had a fancy for foreign life, and used to dream of marrying a foreigner, and settling down in some picturesque old castle. In fact, he had not only built his castle in the air, he had furnished it, and put in the inhabitants. Perhaps he was too ambitious, for he was poor, though his family was good. Anyhow, he went at last to stay at this German château, and made acquaintance with the dream-cousin, and fell in love with her on the spot, and thought that she liked him, and it was a very promising beginning.'

Frank stopped, and bent over his drawing. Marie waited a minute in silence.

'And she treated him badly after all,' she said presently. 'Or her parents objected. That would not be very strange.'

'Am I to finish the story? No, it does not end quite in that way. He found after a few days that the young lady was already engaged.'

'Such things will happen.'

'Yes, they will. But the unfortunate part is to come. She was engaged, but she cared no more for her fiancé than madame your grandmother does for Monsieur le Curé.'

'You are wicked!' said Marie, suddenly rising. 'I will not hear any more of your story. I am going away.'

'Forgive me, and stay one moment,' said Frank.

He laid aside his drawing and got up too, looking down with a light in his eyes into Marie's

face, which was flushed and disturbed; her lips were trembling, the foundations of her poor little mind were shaken, as he had seen them once before.

'I was telling you about the unhappiness of this Englishman. He stayed on at the château, and every day showed him more and more how dear his cousin was to him. And not only that—he saw that his presence was not disagreeable to her. These two were born to belong to each other, yet she was doomed to pass her life with a man whom she regarded with perfect indifference. I don't know how much she cared; but sometimes she was blind or cruel enough to ask her English cousin what made him look sad—why he was not always cheerful and contented. Shall I go on and tell you the end?'

'No,' said Marie passionately. 'Ah, I will never talk to you again.'

'Never, Marie?'

'Not if you tell me such stories as these. Your Englishman should have gone away; he should have left her in peace. Ah, que je suis malheureuse!' she exclaimed, wringing her hands. 'Why do you say such things to me? Do you take me for a fool? What is the use of it?'

'What indeed?' said Frank sadly. 'Forgive me, and I will not offend you again. I have no greater wish than to see you happy.'

'This is not the way to make me so,' said Marie; and then suddenly came tears and choking sobs. She covered her face with her hands, and hurried across the terrace into the house, a quiet shady refuge, with its closed shutters and lowered blinds.

'Ah, mon Dieu, mon Dieu, what will become of me! What shall I do?' she cried to herself

in her own room, burying her face in the pillow.

'At any rate she cares for me,' thought Frank. He took his drawing into the library, and went off for a stroll in the fields. 'We are in for it now. What next?'

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHATEAU DE CARILLON.

It was the day after this éclaircissement that Frank Wyatt put his sketching materials in his pocket and strolled off to Carillon, to pay his visit to Mme. d'Yves. The happy natural life at the château was sadly interfered with. Marie avoided him as much as possible, and was cross to everybody else, so that a cloud seemed to have come over the bright sky of Les Sapinières. Frank thought that no doubt this would soon pass away, but at the time it was disagreeable. Johnny went off immediately after breakfast for another day's shooting with the Maire; Mme. de Saint-Hilaire hurried away to a consultation with her vigneron; Marie went up-stairs to her own room; and Agnes came out to her elder brother, who was smoking on the terrace.

'Frank, have you and Marie been quarrelling?' she said. 'She seems very much upset about something. It was the same last night, but her little tempers are generally gone in the morning.'

'Poor little mortal!' said Frank. 'Quarrelling? No, we are the best of friends.'

Agnes looked up curiously into her brother's face. In his voice, at any rate, there was a touch of real feeling, which was rather strange in Frank. At least, if he had any feeling, he seldom con-

descended to show it to his sister. Now he was gazing down the avenue with a far-away dream in his eyes, which might have belonged to Johnny.

'Then what is it, I wonder?' said Agnes. 'Can she be unhappy about that—'

'I thought you women were always so sharp-sighted. Have you lived with Marie all this time, and fancied she was happy? Perhaps it is as well for her, for you never have any mercy on each other.'

'What do you mean, Frank?'

'Well, I wonder what you would do in her place? If you were dragged into an engagement which was misery to you, and could not escape, would you be as brave and as cheerful as she is, poor little thing, and as determined to live up to your principles and keep your word, whatever it might cost you?'

'But is she so unhappy about that, do you think?' said Agnes anxiously. 'She does not seem so to me. She likes going to Rochemar, and one night when we were talking she told me that she meant to be happy, that they would agree very well, and be always amiable to each other, and that she wanted nothing better. In fact,' Agnes added, smiling, 'she thought that too much love would be rather a bore than otherwise.'

'I believe she has changed her mind,' said Frank. 'I am rather sorry we came to France this autumn,' he went on, after a pause. 'It is not pleasant to see this kind of thing—a dear charming little girl like Marie sacrificed in this way, and feeling herself bound by a false idea of honour to keep to the arrangement that other people have made for her. Of course such things are happening every day, but it is only per-

sonal experience that shows one how monstrous they are.'

Agnes looked and listened in great surprise, for her brother in these words was giving her a totally new view of his own character. Frank so deeply concerned in another person's troubles; Frank speaking earnestly and with a slight tremulousness in his voice, forsaking all his cool philosophy, and influenced by the same winds of human sympathy which drive ordinary mortals to and fro in the world! What could it all mean? That was only too clear. She laid her hand gently on his arm, and looked up into the handsome face under its changed aspect, her own full of a feeling which could seldom venture to show itself.

'I wish we had not come indeed,' she said, 'if you are to be made unhappy. O, what a pity! I had no idea of this.'

'Whatever your ideas may be, you had better keep them to yourself,' said Frank.

'Of course. But is there nothing that can be done?'

'Don't be absurd. One must bear it. But I wish it was only myself.'

'But are you sure—are you certain that she—'

'Yes,' said Frank.

He threw his cigar over the wall, and began pacing up and down the terrace with his hands in his pockets and a sad discontented face bent towards the ground.

'How did you find out?' said Agnes, walking along beside him.

'Don't ask stupid questions. Could we live in the same house without finding each other out?'

'How dreadfully unfortunate!' said Agnes.

Marie, in the room above, peeped through her shutters and saw the brother and sister walk-

ing up and down in the sun. She watched them for a minute and then turned away. Instinct told her that they were talking about her, the poor little imprisoned bird, who began to feel that she should die if she might not fly away with them to freedom over the sea.

Agnes, though shocked, was very much touched and interested by all her brother said. He began talking about their English home, and making her fancy Marie there among all their friends, the idol and darling of every one, throwing all the English girls into the shade with her grace and refinement, her cleverness, and that delicate beauty which was part of her inheritance. This sort of talk went on for about a quarter of an hour, and Agnes entered into it in spite of her own misgivings. But they suddenly became too strong for her. She pulled herself up, and came back with a sudden rebound to reality, when Frank observed that Mme. de Saint-Hilaire would have no right to complain if her granddaughter chose to do what her own first cousin had done.

'O Frank, we let ourselves talk like this, but we are forgetting,' Agnes said. 'It really is not right. We must remember her engagement. It is impossible to interfere now. I am very, very sorry about it all, but I can only give you one piece of advice.'

'What is it?'

'I'm sure you will see that it is the only thing you can do. We can easily think of some excuse. You must go away. Perhaps Johnny and I need not—he has this engagement with M. de Valmont; but you—'

Frank began to laugh.

'Go away? Thank you. Your ideas always are original. What

would be the use of running away now?'

'It would be much better and happier both for you and for Marie if you were to see no more of each other.'

'It would not make the slightest difference to either of us, and would give rise to all sorts of remarks. Absurd! As if we were two babies who could not control our feelings. Marie would despise the idea. I thought you were a sensible woman.'

'As to that,' said Agnes, 'one has one's instincts; and I believe Marie would agree with me.'

'You may ask her, if you have the face to do it. If you and she unite in driving me away, you may possibly succeed. Women can always do those things if they choose. But I shall never forgive you. I thought you meant to be friendly.'

'I am sure your best friend could not give any other advice.'

'I hate that cant. However,' said Frank, 'as no doubt you are aware, nothing that any one can do could possibly make the affair anything but hopeless. So you may do as you please. If you think I shall make a fool of myself do your best to drive me away. I think you may trust Marie in her own hands. She is surrounded with high walls enough.'

'Frank, don't be angry with me. I am most heartily sorry for you. It is only that I can't bear to see you suffering from disappointment like this—'

'Yes, I know,' said Frank. 'All right. You are a good old girl. But I can tell you that absence would be anything but a cure. Be as kind to Marie as you can, without saying a word of this. I shall be out of the way this afternoon. I am going down to Carillon to look at the château.'

He left his sister in a state of puzzled misery, and walked off alone. He avoided the town, taking a short cut by lanes and the river-side, and was soon close to the old gray château. As he approached he saw M. and Mme. d'Yves in the garden. He wore a white jacket and a curly Panama hat. She was dressed like an Arcadian shepherdess, with bunches of flowers all over her gown, and a wreath round her hat, and a light cane in her hand. Two poodles and several pugs were disporting themselves about her. She saw Frank as he came up, and immediately went forward to meet him.

'Monsieur, I am charmed to see you. Allow me to present my husband—M. le Baron d'Yves. Come in, I beg. The sun is really too hot outside.'

M. d'Yves flourished his hat and seconded his wife's courtesies. He was a man with a yellow complexion, and a thick black monstache, and large fine eyes, which had not much speculation in them. Neither was it a very agreeable smile which showed his teeth so plainly.

But Frank was ready to be pleased, and these people were determined to make themselves pleasant to him. They took him through a little arched door into the stone courtyard of the château, where flowering plants stood in pots and tubs against the brown crumbling walls. Outside lay the garden shining in the sun, and then the dancing river. A flight of steps in the thick old wall led up to madame's salon, a long narrow room which might have been in Paris, so crammed was it with furniture and ornaments—a soft carpet on the floor, tropical plants spreading out their luxuriance of leaf and colour and scent in the windows and all the recesses,

glass and ormolu and china of all countries, two great lustre chandeliers shimmering from the ceiling, every modern luxury that could help the owners to bear their isolation. Mme. d'Yves was quite pleased that the stranger should admire all her pretty things, and the three went round the room from one new ornament to another. Then she led the way along a passage and down some steps to a *salle-à-manger*, all corners, in one of which a small table was laid out with 'götter,' and here Frank had to refresh himself after his walk. In other rooms M. d'Yves had to show him walls hung with curious old pictures, on which the opinion of an English amateur seemed to be invaluable. Then there were a collection of Roman coins, some old Gobelin tapestry, Celtic weapons found in the neighbourhood, and more modern ones found in or near the château itself. M. d'Yves grew very animated among all these things, and he and Frank were deep in an antiquarian discussion, in which his visitor was surprised at the depth and accuracy of his knowledge, when Mme. d'Yves came back from speaking to a servant at the door.

'Mon ami, somebody is asking for you. I think it is one of your friends from Tours.'

'But what shall I do?' exclaimed M. d'Yves; 'this gentleman has not yet seen half the château. We have not even finished our talk on these coins. They must wait.'

'No, no, they are in a hurry. Monsieur will excuse you, I feel sure. I will do my best to entertain him till your return.'

On this M. d'Yves took himself off, with many bows and apologies. The lady led the way back to the salon, where she made Frank establish himself in a low satin-

covered chair, which he found extremely comfortable, and sat down herself on one opposite. It was more difficult to talk to her than to her husband. She was very self-conscious, arranging herself in attitudes, tossing her ribbons, laughing affectedly, and talking in a high strained voice, with an accent which seemed like an attempt at the Parisian, with a strong flavour of something very provincial. Still, with her wealth and all her pretty things about her, Frank could not help thinking that in an English country neighbourhood people would have contrived to swallow these defects, and he did not himself see why those ladies who had once made her acquaintance should have been unkind enough to drop it. But just then he felt impatient of good French society and all its ways, and thus was not disinclined to stand up for Mme. d'Yves against such people as the Rochemar family.

'Your château is certainly very beautiful, madame,' said Frank, 'but you must find it dull sometimes. I daresay you are always glad to return to Paris.'

'Sometimes I am glad enough,' nodded Mme. d'Yves; 'when the weather is bad, and there is nothing to do but to look out of the window. And sometimes my husband is away, and then it is dull enough. No visitors here, monsieur. You are the first who has entered our doors for a fortnight. Allons, c'est assez triste. But France is a cheerful country, and no doubt you are very happy at Les Sapinières?'

'Yes,' said Frank; but there was a shade of doubt in his tone.

'Are you not?' said Mme. d'Yves; 'O, yes, you must be perfectly happy. Madame your aunt, the good Comtesse—no one

can be triste in her house, there is life enough there. And mademoiselle—who should be happy if she is not?'

Frank began to feel rather uncomfortable, with Mme. d'Yves sitting upright on her chair close to him, and staring into his face, with a curious sort of laugh in her black eyes.

'You are quite right, madame; who indeed?' he said.

'Ah, ma foi, I am glad to hear you say so. I was presumptuous enough to have my little fears, my slight doubts. But you set my mind at rest, monsieur. When I hear of marriages being arranged all round me, I sometimes dare to wonder if these arrangements are quite pleasing to the young people themselves. And Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire is so pretty, so gentille, that I am very glad to hear she is happy.'

'Then you do not approve of these arrangements, madame?'

'They are the fashion,' she said, shrugging her shoulders. 'But one should speak from experience, and I have none. My own was a marriage of a very different sort.'

'But I suppose,' said Frank, talking on quite calmly, 'that every inquiry is made by the parents to insure happiness. M. de Rochemar bears the highest character, I believe?'

Another shrug of those eloquent shoulders, and a rather more amused stare in the black eyes.

'What should I know about his character?'

'But you do know something, madame?' said Frank, rather eagerly.

'Nothing bad enough to break the engagement. He is proud, poor man, and stupid too. Nobody admires him but his own family, and they, you see, are

bound to it. I have heard that they hate him in the army—but what are these reports? Less than nothing.'

'They are something, though, when one considers who is to be married to him,' said Frank, half to himself.

'Monsieur,' said Mme. d'Yves gravely, 'when you are as old as I am, you will see that it is useless to dream of interfering in affairs like these. M. le Marquis will treat his wife very well, no doubt. You English are so sentimental.'

She put her head on one side, and looked at Frank as if she was studying the character. He thought prudently that it might be as well to change the conversation.

'I hope you like the English, madame,' he said.

Mme. d'Yves had seen very little of them, but of course had plenty to say. Her husband knew more of them than she did. Some of them she thought must be charming; others, perhaps, a little 'brusques,' but true, honest, affectionate.

'I have always heard that they make the best husbands,' she said, smiling. 'You are perhaps married, monsieur?'

'Not at all, madame.'

Frank had been rather sleepy and indifferent for the last few minutes, but this question roused him and made him laugh. Mme. d'Yves began to laugh too.

'Tiens!' said she, lifting her eyebrows, and opening her eyes very wide; 'I thought it was quite a paternal interest that you took in the affairs of mademoiselle.'

'The interest of a cousin and a friend,' said Frank. What was he to do if this woman would persist in going back to the subject? After all, no harm could come of listening to her remarks, and per-

haps a ray of light might flash out somewhere.

'Ah, I see very well,' said Mme. d'Yves. 'I am slightly acquainted both with M. de Roche-mar and yourself, and all I can venture to say is, that I am sorry for Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire.'

'You have no cause, madame, though I suppose I must thank you for your goodness. I have neither the fortune nor the position which would have enabled me, even if I had been here in time, to make myself a rival of M. de Roche-mar.'

'C'est dommage,' said Mme. d'Yves, looking at him approvingly.

Frank was not sure that these penetrating eyes of hers did not see a great deal more than he wished to show. He was half glad and half sorry that M. d'Yves came hurrying in, and that they all set out at once to wander through the intricacies of the curious old mass of buildings.

'There are marvellous stories of people having been hidden here in the great Revolution,' said M. d'Yves, as they went poking up a staircase in the thickness of the wall, leading to a suite of wonderful little cell-like rooms which could not possibly be discerned from outside. 'And in later days, too, they have been found useful. You are English, monsieur, and if I ask you to keep a secret I know it is safe. Four years ago the gendarmes were searching all over France for an unfortunate friend of mine who had got himself into a scrape in Paris. For three months we kept him here, and then I dressed him up as a servant, and took him across the country to Saint-Malo. He is now safe in California.'

'He must have been very grateful to you and your old château,' said Frank.



AFTER DINNER AT LES SAPINIERES.

See the ' Dreamland of Love,' p. 315.

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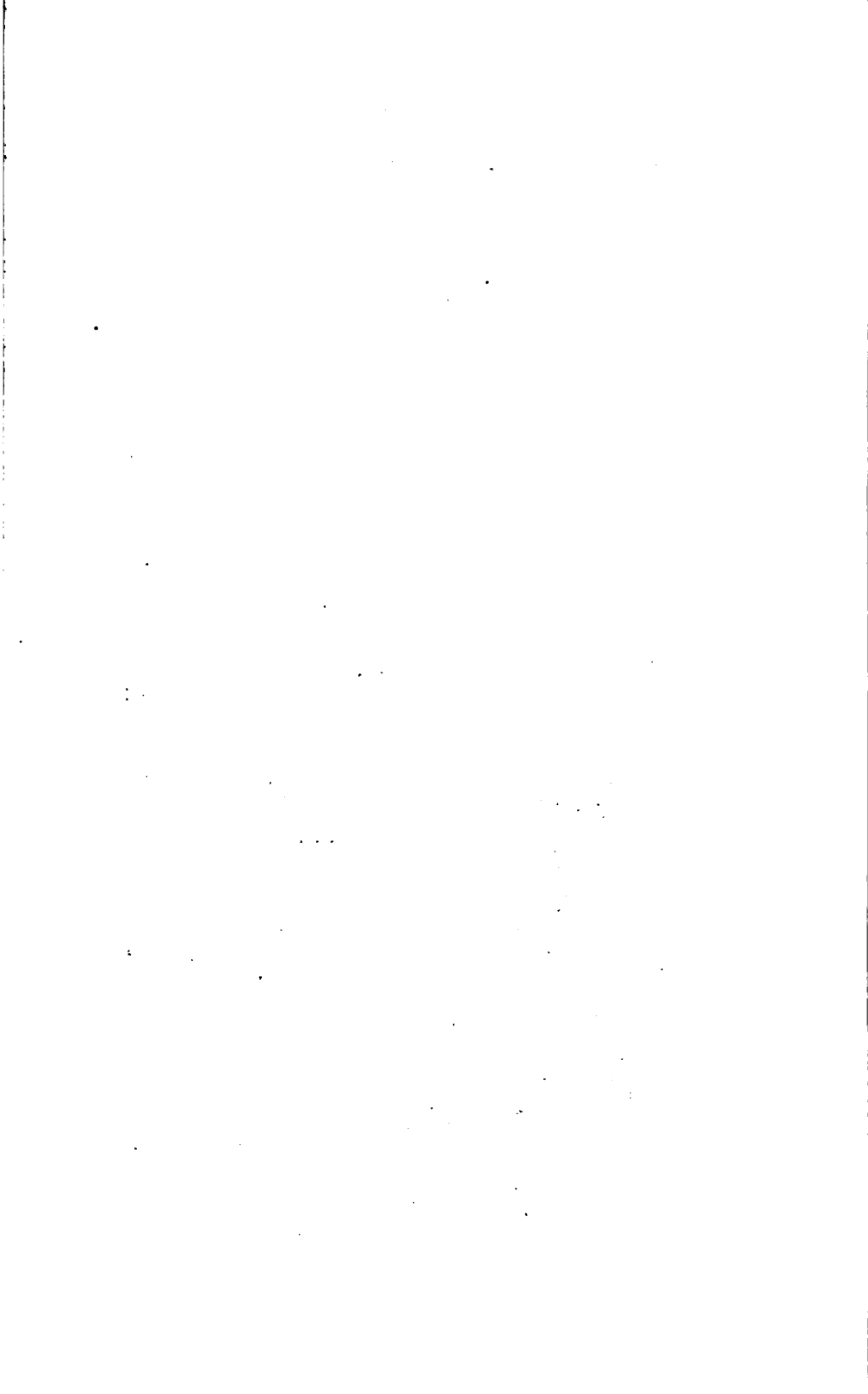
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'Without doubt, monsieur. And there is no action of my life on which I look back with greater pleasure. Allons! what is there more delightful than to help one's friends in a difficulty?'

'You are very generous, monsieur,' said Frank. 'When I get into my next scrape, I shall wish I was one of your friends.'

'Then, cher monsieur, do me the honour to accept my friendship,' exclaimed M. d'Yves, advancing the tips of his fingers, which Frank immediately seized and shook.

They all laughed, and Mme. d'Yves made him a little smiling bow.

'We shall not forget, monsieur,' she said. 'Your next scrape—when is it likely to be?'

'That indeed I cannot tell you, madame,' said Frank. 'But it is as well to be prepared beforehand.'

He lingered so long among the curiosities of the château that it was too late to make a sketch that day. When he went away his hosts walked with him to the corner of the garden, and sauntered back slowly between their rows of dahlias.

Frank little thought, as he walked home, and tried to see a clear path for himself through the misty chaos of the future, that he was the subject of an interesting conversation between the soi-disant baron and his wife, whose quick wits had not been long in taking measure of the young Anglais and his half-developed ideas.

'I tell you I am right,' said Mme. d'Yves, shaking her cane in the air. 'Now we shall see. For my part I perceive a prospect of revenge on ces maudits de Rochemar. When I have seen the young man again I will tell you more. Tais-toi; laisse-moi faire. Nous verrons.'

Frank was inclined to be dull and silent at Les Sapinières that evening, but he brightened up presently, finding that that strange little person Marie was herself again.

On the terrace after dinner they were all laughing and talking together, as if nothing had ever happened to disturb their tranquillity. Agnes was the gravest among them. She could not understand Marie, and wondered at Frank, who had left her that morning in such an unhappy frame of mind.

It was a very dark night, still and sultry. The lamp burned steadily on the little table in the middle of the group, as they drank their coffee, chatted, and played with Peloton. All the figures were brightly relieved against a black background, and among them Marie seemed to stand out the clearest; her pale face was full of the restless life of her country.

'A bas, Peloton!' said she, putting down her cup, and leaning back in her chair. 'Allons! let us sing a little.'

She did not look at Frank or address him; but his voice was ready to join in, and the low sweet harmony went ringing along the terrace and stealing softly down into the open country:

'Combien j'ai douce souvenance
Du joli lieu de ma naissance!
Ma sœur, qu'ils étaient beaux, ces jours
De France!
O mon pays, sois mes amours
Toujours!'

"'Leur souvenir fait tous les jours ma peine,'" repeated Frank, when the song was done. 'That is what we shall be saying this time next year.'

There was a moment's pause, and then Mme. de Saint-Hilaire leaned forward, and laid her hand kindly on his.

'No, mon ami, the remembrance must be pleasant, not painful. Be-

sides, I shall want you here again. I shall be alone—Marie will be gone; you must come and cheer me.'

'You are very kind,' said Frank; 'but I have a superstition that no experience can be like the first. And whatever pain there may be in the remembrance, it is still "douce souvenance."'

CHAPTER XV.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

AGNES still thought that if her brother did the right thing he would find some excuse for going away from Les Sapinières, even if it was only to make an excursion and come back again. But this idea found no favour with him. A day or two after his visit to Carillon she ventured to speak to him again, this time dropping down on him in the meadows, as he was making a sketch of the south-west side of the château.

'Do you want anything?' said Frank, as she lingered near him, picking autumn crocuses.

'Yes. I want to know how all this is going to end,' said Agnes, sitting down on the grass. 'What is going to become of you—and Marie?'

'What should you imagine?' said Frank, looking up at the roof he was drawing.

'Well, you are both cheerful enough outside, certainly. I know you have a great deal of self-command; but Marie does rather surprise me.'

'Her great-grandmother went smiling to the guillotine.'

'That is true. There is something very wonderful about these Frenchwomen; I have felt that for some time. Then poor Marie is also—going smiling to the guillotine?'

'If you choose to call it so. I can't compliment you on your consistency.'

'You have both made up your minds that things must remain as they are. Well, I suppose you are quite right, and you certainly behave like two Spartans; but I think it must be very painful for both of you.'

'There is little enough pleasure in this life,' said Frank. 'One can't spare any of it, even if it is mixed with a strong dose of pain.'

'This visit is, of course, very delightful,' said Agnes, after a long pause; 'but I almost wish it was over.'

'Do you? Here's Johnny: what brings him down at such a pace?'

'Look here!' said Johnny, running into the meadow, and throwing himself down beside them, 'here's a black-edged letter from home. Make haste and open it, Agnes.'

Agnes glanced down the first page of her letter, with an exclamation of distress:

'O, dear! Poor uncle Francis! Such sad news—Walter is dead!'

'Dead! Impossible!' exclaimed Frank, throwing down his drawing. 'When—how did it happen?'

'At Maudsley, of fever. He was only ill a few days; he died last Sunday. What will uncle Francis do?'

The dead Walter's three cousins remained together for a little time reading their mother's letter, saying a word or two now and then. To them all there was something awe-striking in the sudden news. The rich, fortunate, happy young fellow whom they had seen last in London, on their way to Paris only a few weeks ago, who had been full of his plans for the autumn, telling Frank and Johnny that French sport was good for

nothing, and they must make haste back to shoot with him! Poor Walter! They had not cared for him much; he was almost too well contented with himself and all his belongings. His lonely old father had taught him to think himself perfection; but no one could say that he was not always good-natured and generous, and ready to help other people out of his abundance of worldly goods. And now he was gone: a wet day's shooting had brought on cold and fever, and in his youth and strength he had passed away out of their sight—wiser now, that foolish light-hearted Walter, than the deepest philosopher left on earth—a citizen of the undiscovered country. O, how strange to sit in this meadow in Anjou, under the shade of those old white towers, and to hear this news, which carried the wanderers so abruptly back to a square red English house, trim gravel, smooth lawns, and flaming flower-beds, and then a screen of elms, and then, a little beyond, a gray church-tower, from which the bell might even now be tolling for their cousin's funeral; for the letter said that he was to be buried on Friday, and this was the day.

Presently Frank got up and walked away, taking the letter with him. Johnny, leaning on his elbows in the grass, twisted himself round and looked after him. Then he turned to Agnes, who was sitting with her hands before her, pale and silent. She wondered what Johnny meant by motioning towards Frank and looking at her so oddly.

'Have you thought of it?' said Johnny, after a minute.

'Of what?'

'Well, you may be cleverer in that way than I am; but I can't hear a thing without thinking of the consequences. I suppose this

means a wonderful change for Frank.'

'A change? What do you mean?'

'I suppose he will have Maudsley. Uncle Francis is not likely to leave it to any one else; he has always been good to Frank. It really is hard on the poor old fellow.'

'Johnny, I wish you would not talk so queerly. You really should not speak of uncle Francis like that—especially now.'

'I was not calling him a poor old fellow,' said Johnny quietly. 'Don't you understand? I mean Frank. Think of this chance in life coming to him just when he won't care for it. I say it is a dreadful misfortune that we did not come down here a few days sooner. If that little girl had seen Frank first, she would have thought twice about accepting that Marquis de Rochemar. Of course she is too well brought up to think about Frank now. I wonder whether she sees how fond he is of her?'

'Who has been talking to you about it, Johnny?' said Agnes.

'Do you think every one is blind but yourself?'

'Well, no; but the less you say about it the better.'

'I am not going to say anything. There is nothing to be said, except, "What an awful pity!" Don't you think so yourself? Do you really believe she likes this De Rochemar?'

'I suppose she does; I hope so,' said Agnes.

'He would not quite have cared to see her carrying on with Frank sometimes,' Johnny went on. 'She is a little flirt. I'll tell you what, I don't believe that the very nicest girls, even in France, marry a man because they are told he is a good match.'

'O, I don't know that,' said Agnes. Her head felt confused,

and she could not quite tell what Johnny was driving at. His hat was lying on the grass; he looked at her, smiling, and pushing back his curly hair. An irresistible impulse made Agnes stretch out her hand and stroke the soft bright sunshiny mass.

'What should you say if I told you I was in love with a French girl?' said Johnny.

'My dear old boy, I should have to be dreadfully sorry,' Agnes answered, quite roused to interest by this question. 'It really would be hard on me to have both you and Frank made miserable.'

'You must not think of yourself, but of me. However, this is quite a different case from Frank's: she is not engaged to some fellow she has never seen in her life.'

'Perhaps not. But are you really in earnest, Johnny? Of course I know who you mean, and I can't say I am surprised; but you must know that it is not the smallest use dreaming of such a thing. Good gracious! as if it would ever be listened to for a moment!'

'Did I say it would? O, of course,' said Johnny philosophically. 'Frank and I were talking one day, and I quite understood that the Great Mogul would have a better chance than I should.'

'Certainly; he has a title, at least.'

'But you confess that you are not surprised. Now was I ever, to your knowledge, in love with anybody before?'

'Not since you were sixteen and adored Lizzie Macdonald. But who is to answer for a sailor?'

'O, I remember Lizzie Macdonald; she was four-and-twenty; she had large eyes, and wore lemon-coloured gloves. She gave me a locket with her hair in it, and then went and married Dr. Stephens. Why do you make

me talk about her now? I have never cared for anybody since till this month; and now I shall never care for anybody again.'

'O, what a pity it is we ever came here!'

'Don't talk that nonsense. I am telling you this that you may not be surprised if you hear of it from anybody else. Because I mean to find out whether it is really hopeless or not. I mean to ask.'

'To ask her?'

Johnny paused for a moment.

'No, not her. Her mother.'

'That will be very good of you,' said Agnes, rejoicing at the thought that Mme. de Valmont was quite capable of taking care of her daughter's future, and that all she herself had to fear was Johnny's disappointment.

But somehow she thought that worse things than this might happen to her sailor-boy. She was sure that the probable refusal would not sour his temper or spoil his character; its worst effect would be to make an old bachelor of him. She hardly knew how it was that his affairs were always so much less disturbing than Frank's; yet Frank was older, cleverer, more worldly-wise, more calculating and cool in his judgments, and far more self-confident. She stopped herself, as if it was an involuntary reproach to Frank, when the words 'I can trust Johnny' would thrust themselves into her mind.

They both sat quite silent among the crocuses for several minutes. Then they saw the tall figure of Frank returning, wandering slowly past the slim white stems of the poplars. They got up at the same moment; and Johnny began to whistle, but silenced himself, remembering the bad news.

'Will it be soon?' said Agnes.

'No. Not till after we come back from Brittany,' said Johnny; and then he walked off towards the château with his hands in his pockets.

CHAPTER XVI.

A CONFESSION.

JOHNNY went off to Vitré with M. de Valmont and Max sooner than was at first intended. Agnes had been rather in despair at the thought of being left alone with two such dangerous young people as Frank and Marie, but was very much comforted by finding that they were both on their best behaviour. Perhaps something of the former ease was gone, but they were studiously polite to each other and every one else. Marie seemed to have lost her suddenly-acquired tastes for riding and drawing. She sat working at her great piece of tapestry, or played her old favourite polkas, or went into the village and bestowed a great deal of her time on the Sisters and their work.

Frank, when he was at home, read French books and newspapers in the library windows. But he was out a great deal. He made expeditions to all the churches and châteaux within a day's journey, and brought back books full of wonderfully pretty sketches. He had the Château de Carillon under several different aspects, and if his relatives at Les Sapinières had had second-sight, they would have seen many an hour spent in its quaint old recesses or lounging in the garden with Mme. d'Yves and her dogs. She and her husband always made him welcome, and there was a flavour of forbidden fruit about this amusement, which no doubt added to its attraction.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire was very busy all this time with her farm-

ing affairs: there were so many different crops to be gathered in that she had to be driving her people hither and thither all day. Walnut-trees were being beaten, horse-chestnuts collected for the cows, potatoes dug, apples gathered, all the other fruits of the earth looked after day by day. Then ploughing was going on, and now the red grapes were ripe, and the vintage must begin at once; two or three days of soft showers forwarded it wonderfully. So the barrels and the pressoir were made ready, and Mme. de Saint-Hilaire walked up into her largest vineyard one Sunday afternoon to take a last look at the grapes, which were to be cut the next morning. Marie and Agnes were gone to vespers, but Frank and her faithful Peloton went with her. The poodle, knowing very well that he must not run in among the vines, kept close behind his mistress, and only cast longing looks at the purple bunches that hung so temptingly among their leaves along the wires.

'That dog looks almost as if he liked grapes,' said Frank, noticing the hungry yet virtuous expression of Peloton's beautiful eyes.

'So he does,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire; 'but I have never yet known him take them off the vines. If he once did that—ah, Peloton, what would become of you!' She turned round and shook her stick at him, but the dog trotted on in conscious virtue.

This vineyard sloped to the south-west, and lay just above the château, looking over to a thickly wooded bank, in the foreground of which the church-spire rose white among the trees. The vines did not run straggling about the ground, after the common fashion of the country, but were planted in regular rows and trained on iron wires, following in this and

their whole cultivation the system of M. Peccault of Tours, a name well known to every one who is interested in the vineyards of that part of France. The grapes were abundant that year, and Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, who was in very good spirits, discoursed to Frank on the mysteries of vine-growing and wine-making.

'I cannot imagine a pleasanter life,' Frank said, 'than to be naturalised here, and to spend the rest of one's days growing vines. Life here would never be monotonous: hunting, shooting, the pleasantest society, glorious roads, good peasants, buried treasures—I think you are very fortunate to live in such a country.'

'Yes, I daresay you find it all very attractive,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire; 'but there is the danger and uncertainty. Those dreadful Red Republicans are scattered all round us. No one knows when there may be another revolution, or whether his own château will be the first burnt down. From what you told me the other day, my dear Frank, of your future prospects, I should say that your position will be more to be envied than mine.'

'As to that, I would willingly change,' said Frank. 'Maudsley is not mine yet, to be sure; but you might have it, under some circumstances, for Les Sapinières.'

'Merci bien! What should I do, with my ways, as an English proprietor?'

'You would be an ornament to the county, my dear aunt.'

'Ah, you are very amiable! I sometimes think a good deal of the future. I hope Marie and M. de Rochemar will live here sometimes. I should be sorry to believe that the old place would be deserted after my death.'

'I would rather live here than at Rochemar,' said Frank. 'It is

like a great prison. Now this is the freest place I ever was in. M. de Rochemar seems to be in no hurry to come home to claim his bride.'

'He will be here soon, no doubt,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'In fact, his mother told me that he might appear any day. He has returned from Algeria, you know; he is now in Paris, and no doubt he will be at Rochemar as soon as possible. It is a very good match for my little Marie.'

'So it seems,' said Frank. 'I am rather curious to see this favoured hero. I think he is the most fortunate man in the world.'

'You admire Marie, then? Ah, that is very amiable of you. I must say that you have shown her every kind of friendly attention. M. de Rochemar ought to be grateful to you; and I shall have great pleasure in introducing you to him. You will like him, I am sure. He has the best possible manners, and is full of intelligence. You must be a good judge, as you have educated yourself so successfully.'

Frank bowed.

'After that,' he said, 'I think I must make a confession, which I hope will not lower your opinion of me. Of course, as things are, my new prospects can make no difference whatever. But I think I must tell you that if Marie had been free, I might now have said something which as merely a poor soldier I could never have dreamed of saying.'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire stopped and looked at him, leaning on her stick; her handsome old face softened suddenly.

'Why did you tell me this?' she said, after a moment's silence, while Frank was gazing across the emerald lines of the vineyard.

'I do not know,' he said. 'I believe I wanted to know what answer you would have given me if these obstacles had not existed.'

'Mon ami,' said the Comtesse, 'you grieve me very much. What is the use of speaking of it at all?'

'Do you mean, *ma tante*,' said Frank gently, 'that if Marie herself had wished it, you would have let her marry an Englishman?'

'Certainly not an ordinary Englishman,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'I think it is far happier and better to remain in one's own country. Ideas, education, everything is different; and under such circumstances it is very hard for people to agree. But all this is changed when one meets a person of your character. Then national differences pass into the shade. If you married a Frenchwoman she would never feel the loss of her country. Provided that you were in a suitable position, there is no one in the world to whom I could trust my granddaughter with more confidence.'

'Thank you,' said Frank. 'Your opinion of me is much too good. I wish I deserved it. But it is rather cruel of you to say all this now—when it is too late.'

'You asked me,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, 'and so I told you the truth. But I am very sorry for you. It cannot exactly be called a disappointment, for I told you of the engagement, I think, the day after you arrived. I hope you have not been very unhappy all this time? Certainly you have not seemed so.'

'One allows oneself to forget the future in the present,' said Frank.

'You have behaved very well, and like a gentleman. I am most grateful to you; for Marie is perhaps a little fanciful, and if it had occurred to you to set her against this marriage, you probably might have done so. As it is, she has only received benefit from the time spent with such cultivated and accomplished people as you and Agnes. I have the highest

esteem for you,' said the old lady emphatically, 'though I fear that is but a poor consolation.'

Frank thanked her again. All these praises were unnecessary, and jarred upon him a good deal. There probably is nothing so stinging to the conscience as praise undeserved.

'Then I have nothing to do,' he said, 'but to wish my cousin every happiness in her married life. You say M. de Rochemar is worthy of her, and I hope he is. And now that I have told you all this, I think it may possibly occur to you that I should be better away. If you have any doubt about it, I can go at once.'

'And why should you go, my dear?'

'Now that you know what I cannot help feeling for Marie, you may think that she would be safer at a distance from such a foolish fellow,' said Frank, smiling sadly.

'On the contrary,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, 'I beg that you will stay here as long as you possibly can. Marie would say the same, if she knew—what she had better not know, *mon cher ami*.'

Frank smiled, and Mme. de Saint-Hilaire hurried on, rather ashamed of her last words, which seemed to have a breath in them of want of confidence.

'Do you understand? You must make no change in your plans. I know what an Englishman's affection is, and I am truly sorry that you should have wasted yours. But I would not deprive you of one moment of happiness, such as it is. Things arrange themselves strangely in this world. If only Mme. de Rochemar had delayed proposing for Marie till her son returned!'

'I suppose, when these things are once settled, no alteration is possible! A French lady never breaks off her engagement, if

something she likes better presents itself?

'Never! Impossible!' cried Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'Unless there was some tremendous reason; and in this match everything is perfection. Where can you have picked up such an idea? Ah, you do such things in England. But the idea would be as horrifying to Marie as it is to me.'

'So I imagine,' said Frank very calmly. 'Pardon, ma tante; I asked the question thoughtlessly.'

He changed the conversation, as if he thought that his own affairs had been talked of long enough, and felt comfortably assured that he stood higher than ever in his aunt's esteem and confidence. He felt also that he had every reason to be satisfied with himself. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire was now made aware of his affection for Marie. If she was sure she would keep a sharp look-out upon her; if she was foolish, and did not take the timely warning, who knew what might happen? One or two facts stood out prominently. His new prospects did not make the slightest difference in his position with Marie. If there were ten Maudsleys waiting for him in England, her engagement to M. de Rochemar would still stand, as grim and immovable a thing as the Château de Rochemar itself. But yet these English estates had their rôle to play. Supposing that anything *did* happen, the heir of Maudsley might expect forgiveness when Lieutenant Frank Wyatt would hope for it in vain.

Marie came into the salon that evening, when they were all waiting in the dusk for dinner. She glided in like a gentle little ghost, and seated herself on a footstool in front of Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, who was in one of the large arm-chairs by the fireplace.

'Grand'mère,' she said, 'I do not believe that poor Mme. d'Yves is a bad woman.'

'Allons! I never said so,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'One may be *bourgeoise* without being *méchante*, I hope.'

'On the contrary, she is very charitable. Do you know, she was at vespers this afternoon, and when we came out she waited to speak to me. I was surprised at first—was I not, Agnes? But I believe she is a good Christian, for she spoke with so much kindness of that poor woman Robert. She told me that she had been to visit her, and that she felt sure she would never get well unless she went to the hospital. And then she said she would offer to pay for her there, only she was not sure whether you would consider it an intrusion.'

'What did you say to her?' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'You know you told me the other day that you could not pay for any more at present. I thanked her, and said that you would be much pleased at any kindness she liked to show to the poor woman. That was all. Afterwards I talked to Sœur Lucie, and she told me that Mme. d'Yves is very charitable, both to the Carillon people and to all the communes round about. She has been twice to visit *cette pauvre Robert*. Sœur Lucie thinks her a very good woman.'

'I am glad to hear it,' said the Comtesse, but she did not seem inclined to enter very warmly into the praises of Mme. d'Yves.

She might be a perfect saint of charity, but that did not place her on a proper footing in society, or make her a desirable acquaintance for Marie, especially as that little demoiselle was before long to be one of the first ladies in the neighbourhood.

(To be continued.)

MICHAEL STROGOFF, OR THE RUSSIAN COURIER.

BY JULES VERNE.

PART II.

CHAPTER X.

BAÏKAL AND AUGARA.

LAKE BAÏKAL is situated seventeen hundred feet above the level of the sea. Its length is about nine hundred versts, its breadth one hundred. Its depth is not known. Madame de Bourboulon states that, according to the boatmen, it likes to be spoken of as 'Madam Sea.' If it is called 'Sir Lake,' it immediately lashes itself into a fury. However, it is reported and believed by the Siberians that a Russian is never drowned in it.

This immense basin of fresh water, fed by more than three hundred rivers, is surrounded by magnificent volcanic mountains. It has no other outlet than the Augara, which, after passing Irkutsk, throws itself into the Yenisei a little above the town of Yeniseisk. As to the mountains which incase it, they form a branch of the Ioungouzes, and are derived from the vast system of the Altaï.

Even now the cold began to be felt. In this territory, subject to peculiar climacteric conditions, the autumn appears to be absorbed in the precocious winter. It was now the beginning of October. The sun set at five o'clock in the evening; and during the long nights the temperature fell to zero. The first snows, which would last till summer, already whitened the neighbouring summits.

During the Siberian winter,

this inland sea is frozen over to a thickness of several feet, and is cut up by the sleighs of couriers and caravans.

Either because there are people who are so wanting in politeness as to call it 'Sir Lake,' or for some more meteorological reason, Lake Baïkal is subject to violent tempests. Its waves, short, like those of all inland seas, are much feared by the rafts, prahms, and steamboats which furrow it during the summer.

It was the south-west point of the lake which Michael had now reached, carrying Nadia, whose whole life, so to speak, was concentrated in her eyes. But what could these two expect, in this wild region, if it was not to die of exhaustion and famine? And yet, what remained of the long journey of six thousand versts for the Czar's courier to reach his end? Nothing but sixty versts on the shore of the lake up to the mouth of the Augara, and eighty versts from the mouth of the Augara to Irkutsk; in all, a hundred and forty versts, or three days' journey for a strong healthy man, even on foot.

Could Michael Strogoff still be that man?

Heaven, no doubt, did not wish to put him to this trial. The fatality which had hitherto pursued his steps seemed for a time to spare him. This end of the Baïkal, this part of the steppe, which he believed to be, and which usually is, desert, was not so now.

About fifty people were collected at the angle formed by the south-west point of the lake.

Nadia immediately caught sight of this group, when Michael, carrying her in his arms, issued from the mountain pass.

The girl feared for a moment that it was a Tartar detachment, sent to beat the shores of the Baikal; in which case, flight would have been impossible to them both.

But Nadia was soon reassured on this point.

'Russians!' she exclaimed.

And with this last effort her eyes closed, and her head fell on Michael's breast.

But they had been seen; and some of these Russians, running to them, led the blind man and the girl to a little point at which was moored a raft.

The raft was just going to start.

These Russians were fugitives of different conditions, whom the same interest had united at this point of Lake Baikal. Driven back by the Tartar scouts, they hoped to obtain a refuge at Irkutsk; but not being able to get there by land—the invaders having taken up a position on the two banks of the Augara—they hoped to reach it by descending the river which flows through that town.

Their plan made Michael's heart leap. A last chance was before him; but he had strength to conceal this, wishing to keep his incognito more strictly than ever.

The fugitives' plan was very simple. A current in the lake runs along by the upper bank to the mouth of the Augara. This current they hoped to utilise, and, with its assistance, to reach the outlet of Lake Baikal. From this point to Irkutsk the rapid waters of the river would bear them

along at a rate of from ten to twelve versts an hour. In a day and a half they might hope to be in sight of the town.

No kind of boat was to be found; they had been obliged to make one; a raft, or rather a float of wood, similar to those which usually are drifted down Siberian rivers, was constructed. A forest of firs, growing on the bank, had supplied the necessary material. The trunks, fastened together with osiers, made a platform on which a hundred people could have easily found room.

On board this raft Michael and Nadia were taken. The girl had returned to herself. Some food was given to her, as well as to her companion. Then, lying on a bed of leaves, she soon fell into a deep sleep.

To those who questioned him, Michael Strogoff said nothing of what had taken place at Tomak. He gave himself out as an inhabitant of Krasnoiarak, who had not been able to get to Irkutsk before the Emir's troops had arrived on the left bank of the Dinka; and he added that very probably the bulk of the Tartar forces had taken up a position before the Siberian capital.

There was not a moment to be lost. Besides, the cold was becoming more and more severe. During the night the temperature fell below zero; ice was already forming on the surface of the Baikal. Although the raft managed to pass easily over the lake, it might not be so easy between the banks of the Augara, should pieces of ice be found to block up its course.

For all these reasons, it was necessary that the fugitives should start without delay.

At eight in the evening the moorings were cast off, and the raft drifted in the current along

the shore. It was steered by means of long poles, under the management of several muscular moujiks.

An old Baikal boatman took command of the raft. He was a man of sixty-five, browned by the sun and lake breezes. A thick white beard flowed over his chest; a fur cap covered his head; his aspect was grave and austere. His large greatcoat, fastened in at the waist, reached down to his heels. This taciturn old fellow was seated in the stern, and issued his commands by gestures, not uttering ten words in ten hours. Besides, the chief work consisted in keeping the raft in the current which ran along the shore, without drifting out into the open.

It has been already said that Russians of all conditions had found a place on the raft. Indeed, to the poor moujiks—women, old men, and children—were joined two or three pilgrims, surprised on their journey by the invasion, a few monks, and a papa. The pilgrims carried a staff, a gourd hung at the belt, and they chanted psalms in a plaintive voice. One came from the Ukraine, another from the Yellow Sea, and a third from the Finland Provinces. This last, who was an aged man, carried at his waist a little padlocked collecting-box, as if it had been hung at a church-door. Of all that he collected during his long and fatiguing pilgrimage, nothing was for himself; he did not even possess the key of the box, which would only be opened on his return.

The monks came from the north of the empire. Three months before they had left the town of Archangel, which some travellers justly believe to have the appearance of an eastern city. They had visited the sacred islands near the

coast of Carelia, the convent of Solovetsk, the convent of Troïtsa, those of St. Antony and St. Theodosia at Kier, the old favourite of the Jagellons, the monastery of Simeonoff at Moscow, that of Kazan, as well as its church of the old believers; and they were now on their way to Irkutsk, wearing the robe, the cowl, and the clothes of serge.

As to the papa, he was a plain village priest, one of the six hundred thousand popular pastors which the Russian empire contains. He was clothed as miserably as the moujiks, not being above them in social position; in fact, labouring like a peasant on his plot of ground, baptising, marrying, burying. He had been able to protect his wife and children from the brutality of the Tartars by sending them away into the northern provinces. He himself had stayed in his parish up to the last moment; then he was obliged to fly, and the Irkutsk road being stopped, had come to Lake Baikal.

These priests, grouped in the forward part of the raft, prayed at regular intervals, raising their voices in the silent night, and at the end of each sentence of their prayer, the 'Slava Bogu,' Glory to God, issued from their lips.

No incident took place during the night. Nadia remained in a sort of stupor, and Michael watched beside her; sleep only overtook him at long intervals, and even then his brain did not rest. At break of day the raft, delayed by a strong breeze, which counteracted the action of the current, was still forty versts from the mouth of the Augara. It seemed probable that the fugitives could not reach it before three or four o'clock in the evening. This did not trouble them; on the contrary, for they would then de-

ascend the river during the night, and the darkness would also favour; their entrance into Irkutsk.

The only anxiety exhibited at times by the old boatman was concerning the formation of ice on the surface of the water. The night had been excessively cold; pieces of ice could be seen drifting towards the west. Nothing was to be dreaded from these, since they could not drift into the Augara, having already passed the mouth; but pieces from the eastern end of the lake might be drawn by the current between the banks of the river; this would cause difficulty, possibly delay, and perhaps even an insurmountable obstacle which would stop the raft.

Michael therefore took immense interest in ascertaining what was the state of the lake, and whether any large number of ice-blocks appeared. Nadia being now awake, he questioned her often, and she gave him an account of all that was going on.

Whilst the blocks were thus drifting, curious phenomena were taking place on the surface of the Baikal. Magnificent jets, from springs of boiling water, shot up from some of those artesian wells which Nature has bored in the very bed of the lake. These jets rose to a great height and spread out in vapour, which was illuminated by the solar rays, and almost immediately condensed by the cold. This curious sight would have assuredly amazed a tourist travelling in peaceful times and sailing for pleasure on this Siberian sea.

At four in the evening, the mouth of the Augara was signalled by the old boatman, between the high granite rocks of the shore. On the right bank could be seen the little port of Livenitchnaia,

its church, and its few houses built on the bank.

But the serious thing was that the ice-blocks from the east were already drifting between the banks of the Augara, and consequently were descending towards Irkutsk. However, their number was not yet great enough to obstruct the course of the raft, nor the cold great enough to increase their number.

The raft arrived at the little port and there stopped.

The old boatman wished to put into the harbour for an hour, in order to make some necessary repairs.

The trunks threatened to separate, and it was important to fasten them more securely together to resist the rapid current of the Augara.

During the fine season, the port of Livenitchnaia is a station for the embarkation or disembarkation of voyagers across Lake Baikal, either on their way to Kiakhtha, the last town on the Russo-Chinese frontier, or when they are returning.

It is therefore much frequented by the steamboats and all the little coasters of the lake.

But Livenitchnaia was abandoned. Its inhabitants had fled for fear of being exposed to the depredations of the Tartars, who were now overrunning both banks of the Augara. They had sent to Irkutsk the flotilla of boats and barges which usually wintered in their harbour; and supplied with all that they could carry, they had taken refuge in time in the capital of Eastern Siberia.

The old boatman did not expect to receive any fresh fugitives at Livenitchnaia, and yet, the moment the raft touched, two passengers, issuing from a deserted house, ran as fast as they could towards the beach.

Nadia, seated on the raft, was abstractedly gazing at the shore.

A cry was about to escape her. She seized Michael's hand, who at that moment raised his head.

'What is the matter, Nadia?' he asked.

'Our two travelling companions, Michael.'

'The Frenchman and the Englishman whom we met in the defiles of the Ural?'

'Yes.'

Michael started, for the strict incognito which he wished to keep ran a risk of being betrayed.

Indeed, it was no longer as Nicholas Korpanoff that Jolivet and Blount would now see him, but as the true Michael Strogoff, courier of the Czar. The two correspondents had already met him twice since their separation at the Ichim post-house—the first time at the Zabediero camp, when he laid open Ivan Ogareff's face with the knout, the second time at Tomsk, when he was condemned by the Emir. They therefore knew who he was and what depended on him.

Michael rapidly made up his mind.

'Nadia,' said he, 'when the Frenchman and the Englishman come on board, ask them to come to me.'

It was, in fact, Harry Blount and Alcide Jolivet, whom not chance but the course of events had brought to the port of Livenitchnaia, as it had brought Michael Strogoff.

As we know, after having been present at the entry of the Tartars into Tomsk, they had departed before the savage execution which terminated the fête. They had therefore never suspected that their former travelling companion had not been put to death, and they were ignorant that he had

been only blinded by order of the Emir.

Having procured horses they had left Tomsk the same evening, with the fixed determination of henceforward dating their letters from the Russian camp of Eastern Siberia.

Jolivet and Blount proceeded by forced marches towards Irkutsk. They hoped to distance Feofar-Khan, and would certainly have done so had it not been for the unexpected apparition of the third column, come from the south, up the valley of the Yeniseï. They had been cut off, as was Michael, before being able even to reach the Dinka, and had been obliged to go back to Lake Baikal.

When they reached Livenitchnaia, they found the port already deserted. It was impossible on this side either for them to enter Irkutsk, now invested by the Tartar army. They had been in the place for three days in much perplexity when the raft arrived.

The fugitives' plan was now explained to them.

There was certainly a chance that they might be able to pass under cover of the night, and penetrate into Irkutsk. They resolved to make the attempt.

Alcide directly communicated with the old boatman, and asked a passage for himself and his companion, offering to pay anything he demanded, whatever it might be.

'No one pays here,' replied the old man gravely; 'every one risks his life, that is all.'

The two correspondents came on board, and Nadia saw them take their places in the fore part of the raft.

Harry Blount was still the reserved Englishman, who had scarcely addressed a word to her during the whole passage of the Ural mountains.

Alcide Jolivet seemed to be rather more grave than usual, and it may be acknowledged that his gravity was justified by the circumstances.

Jolivet had, as has been said, taken his seat on the raft, when he felt a hand laid on his arm.

Turning, he recognised Nadia, the sister of the man who was no longer Nicholas Korpanoff, but Michael Strogoff, courier of the Czar.

He was about to make an exclamation of surprise when he saw the young girl lay her finger on her lips.

'Come,' said Nadia.

And with careless air, Alcide rose and followed her, making a sign to Blount to accompany him.

But if the surprise of the correspondents had been great at meeting Nadia on the raft, it was boundless when they perceived Michael Strogoff, whom they had believed to be no longer living.

Michael had not moved at their approach. Jolivet turned towards the girl.

'He does not see you, gentlemen,' said Nadia. 'The Tartars have burnt out his eyes! My poor brother is blind!'

A feeling of lively compassion exhibited itself on the faces of Blount and his companion.

In a moment they were seated beside Michael, pressing his hand and waiting until he spoke to them.

'Gentlemen,' said Michael, in a low voice, 'you ought not to know who I am, nor what I am come to do in Siberia. I ask you to keep my secret. Will you promise me to do so?'

'On my honour,' answered Jolivet.

'On my word as a gentleman,' added Blount.

'Good, gentlemen.'

'Can we be of any use to you?' asked Harry Blount. 'Could we not help you to accomplish your task?'

'I prefer to act alone,' replied Michael.

'But those blackguards have destroyed your sight,' said Alcide.

'I have Nadia, and her eyes are enough for me!'

In half an hour the raft left the little port of Livenitchnaia, and entered the river. It was five in the evening and getting dusk. The night promised to be dark and very cold also, for the temperature was already below zero.

Alcide and Blount, though they had promised to keep Michael's secret, did not, however, leave him. They talked in a low voice, and the blind man, adding what they told him to what he already knew, was able to form an exact idea of the state of things.

It was certain that the Tartars had actually invested Irkutsk, and that the three columns had effected a junction. There was no doubt that the Emir and Ivan Ogareff were before the capital.

But why did the Czar's courier exhibit such haste to get there, now that the imperial letter could no longer be given by him to the Grand Duke, and when he did not even know the contents of it? Alcide Jolivet and Blount could not understand it any more than Nadia had done.

No one spoke of the past, except when Jolivet thought it his duty to say to Michael,

'We owe you some apology for not shaking hands with you when we separated at Ichim.'

'No, you had reason to think me a coward!'

'At any rate,' added the Frenchman, 'you knouted the face of that villain finely, and he will

carry the mark of it for a long time.'

'No, not a long time,' replied Michael quietly.

Half an hour after leaving Li-venitchnaia, Blount and his companion were acquainted with the cruel trials through which Michael and his companion had successively passed. They could not but heartily admire his energy, which was only equalled by the young girl's devotion. Their opinion of Michael was exactly what the Czar had expressed at Moscow: 'Indeed, this is a man!'

The raft swiftly threaded its way among the blocks of ice which were carried along in the current of the Augara. A moving panorama was displayed on both sides of the river, and by an optical illusion it appeared as if it was the raft which was motionless before a succession of picturesque scenes. Here were high granite cliffs, there wild gorges, down which rushed a torrent; sometimes appeared a clearing with a still smoking village, then thick pine forests blazing. But though the Tartars had left their traces on all sides, they themselves were not to be seen as yet, for they were more especially massed at the approaches to Irkutsk.

All this time the pilgrims were repeating their prayers aloud, and the old boatman, shoving away the blocks of ice which pressed too near them, imperturbably steered the raft in the middle of the rapid current of the Augara.

complete darkness. The moon, being new, had not yet risen. From the middle of the river the banks were invisible. The cliffs were confounded with the heavy low-hanging clouds. At intervals a puff of wind came from the east, but it soon died away in the narrow valley of the Augara.

The darkness could not fail to favour in a considerable degree the plans of the fugitives. Indeed, although the Tartar outposts must have been drawn up on both banks, the raft had a good chance of passing unperceived. It was not likely either that the besiegers would have barred the river above Irkutsk, since they knew that the Russians could not expect any help from the south of the province. Besides this, before long Nature would herself establish a barrier, by cementing with frost the blocks of ice accumulated between the two banks.

Perfect silence now reigned on board the raft.

The voices of the pilgrims were no longer heard. They still prayed, but their prayer was but a murmur, which could not reach as far as either bank. The fugitives lay flat on the platform, so that the raft was scarcely above the level of the water. The old boatman crouched down forward among his men, solely occupied in keeping off the ice-blocks, a manœuvre which was performed without noise.

The drifting of the ice was a favourable circumstance, so long as it did not offer an insurmountable obstacle to the passage of the raft. If that object had been alone on the water, it would have run a risk of being seen, even in the darkness; but, as it was, it was confounded with these moving masses, of all shapes and sizes, and the tumult caused by the crashing of the blocks against each

CHAPTER XI.

BETWEEN TWO BANKS.

By eight in the evening the country, as the state of the sky had foretold, was enveloped in

other concealed likewise any suspicious noises.

There was a sharp frost. The fugitives suffered cruelly, having no other shelter than a few branches of birch. They cowered down together, endeavouring to keep each other warm, the temperature being now ten degrees below freezing point. The wind, though slight, had passed over the snow-clad mountains of the east, and pierced them through and through.

Michael and Nadia, lying in the after part of the raft, bore this increase of suffering without complaint. Jolivet and Blount, placed near them, stood these first assaults of the Siberian winter as well as they could. No one now spoke, even in a low voice. Their situation entirely absorbed them. At any moment an incident might occur, a danger, a catastrophe even, from which they might not escape unscathed.

For a man who hoped soon to accomplish his mission, Michael was singularly calm. Even in the gravest conjunctures his energy had never abandoned him. He already saw the moment when he would be at last allowed to think of his mother, of Nadia, of himself! He now only dreaded one last and unhappy chance; this was that the raft might be completely barred by ice before reaching Irkutsk. He thought but of this, determined beforehand, if necessary, to attempt some bold stroke.

Restored by a few hours' rest, Nadia had regained the physical energy which misery had sometimes overcome, although without ever having shaken her moral energy. She thought, too, that if Michael had to make any fresh effort to attain his end, she must be there to guide him. But in proportion as she drew nearer to Irkutsk the image of her father rose more and more clearly before

her mind. She saw him in the invested town, far from those he loved, but, as she never doubted, struggling against the invaders with all the spirit of his patriotism. In a few hours, if Heaven favoured them, she would be in his arms, giving him her mother's last words, and nothing should ever separate them again. If the term of Warsili Fedor's exile should never come to an end, his daughter would remain exiled with him. Then, by a natural transition, she came back to him who would have enabled her to see her father again, to that generous companion, that 'brother,' who, the Tartars driven back, would retake the road to Moscow, and whom she would perhaps never see again!

As to Alcide Jolivet and Harry Blount, they had one and the same thought, which was that the situation was extremely dramatic, and that, well worked up, it would furnish a most deeply interesting article. The Englishman thought of the readers of the *Daily Telegraph*, and the Frenchman of those of his cousin Madeleine. At heart, both were not without feeling some emotion.

'Well, so much the better,' thought Alcide Jolivet; 'to move others one must be moved oneself! I believe there is some celebrated verse on the subject, but hang me if I can recollect it!'

And with his well-practised eyes he endeavoured to pierce the gloom which enveloped the river.

However, every now and then a burst of light, dispelling the darkness for a time, exhibited the banks under some fantastic aspect—either a forest on fire, or a still burning village, a sinister reproduction of the daylight scenes, with the contrast of the night. The Augara was occasionally illuminated from one bank to the other. The blocks of ice formed

so many mirrors, which, reflecting the flames on every point and in every colour, were whirled along by the caprice of the current. The raft passed unperceived in the midst of these floating masses.

The danger was not at these points.

But a peril of another nature menaced the fugitives—one that they could not foresee, and, above all, one that they could not avoid. Chance discovered it to Alcide Jolivet in this way. Lying at the right side of the raft, Jolivet let his hand hang over into the water. Suddenly he was surprised by the impression made on it by contact with the surface of the current. It seemed to be of a slimy consistency, as if it had been made of mineral oil.

Alcide, aiding his touch by his sense of smelling, could not be mistaken. It was really a layer of liquid naphtha, floating on the surface of the river and flowing with it!

Was the raft really floating on this substance, which is in the highest degree combustible? Where had this naphtha come from? Was it a natural phenomenon taking place on the surface of the Augara, or was it to serve as an engine of destruction put in motion by the Tartars? Did they intend to carry conflagration into Irkutsk by means which the laws of war could never justify between civilised nations?

Such were the questions which Alcide asked himself; but he thought it best to make this incident known only to Harry Blount; and they both agreed in not alarming their companions by revealing to them this new danger.

It is known that the soil of Central Asia is like a sponge impregnated with liquid hydrogen.

At the port of Bakou, on the Persian frontier, in the peninsula

of Abcheron, on the Caspian Sea, in Asia Minor, in China, in the Yonz-Hyan, in the Birman Empire, springs of mineral oil in thousands rise to the surface of the ground. It is an 'oil country,' similar to the one which bears this name in North America.

During certain religious festivals, principally at the port of Bakou, the natives, who are fire-worshippers, throw liquid naphtha on the surface of the sea, which buoys it up, its density being inferior to that of water. Then at nightfall, when a layer of mineral oil is thus spread over the Caspian, they light it, and exhibit the matchless spectacle of an ocean of fire undulating and breaking into waves under the breeze.

But what is only a sign of rejoicing at Bakou might prove a fearful disaster on the waters of the Augara. Whether it was set on fire by malevolence or imprudence, in the twinkling of an eye a conflagration might spread beyond Irkutsk.

On board the raft no imprudence was to be feared; but everything was to be dreaded from the conflagrations on both banks of the Augara, for should a lighted straw or even a spark blow into the water, it would inevitably set the whole current of naphtha in a blaze.

The apprehensions of Jolivet and Blount may be better understood than described. Would it not be prudent, in consequence of this new danger, to land on one of the banks and wait there? they asked each other.

'At any rate,' said Alcide, 'whatever the danger may be, I know some one who will not land.'

He alluded to Michael Strogoff.

In the mean time on glided the raft among the masses of ice, which were gradually getting closer and closer together.

Up till then no Tartar detachment had been seen, which showed that the raft was not abreast of the outposts. At about ten o'clock, however, Harry Blount caught sight of a number of black objects moving on the ice-blocks. Springing from one to the other, they rapidly approached.

'Tartars!' he thought.

And creeping up to the old boatman, he pointed out to him the suspicious objects.

The old man looked attentively.

'They are only wolves!' said he. 'I like them better than Tartars. But we must defend ourselves, and without noise.'

The fugitives would indeed have to defend themselves against these ferocious beasts, whom hunger and cold had sent roaming through the province. They had smelt out the raft, and would soon attack it. The fugitives must struggle, but without using firearms, for they could not now be far from the Tartar posts.

The women and children were collected in the middle of the raft, and the men, some armed with poles, others with their knives, but the most part with sticks, stood prepared to repulse their assailants. They did not make a sound, but the howls of the wolves filled the air.

Michael did not wish to remain inactive. He lay down at the side attacked by the savage pack. He drew his knife, and every time that a wolf passed within his reach, his hand found out the way to plunge his weapon into its throat. Neither was Jolivet nor Blount idle, but fought bravely with the brutes. Their companions gallantly seconded them. The battle was carried on in silence, although many of the fugitives received severe bites.

The struggle did not appear as if it would soon terminate. The

pack was being continually reinforced from the right bank of the Angara.

'This will never be finished!' said Alcide, brandishing his dagger, red with blood.

In fact, half an hour after the commencement of the attack, the wolves were still coming in hundreds across the ice.

The exhausted fugitives were evidently getting weaker. The fight was going against them. At that moment a group of ten huge wolves, raging with hunger, their eyes glowing in the darkness like red-hot coals, sprang on to the raft. Jolivet and his companion threw themselves into the midst of the fierce beasts, and Michael was finding his way towards them, when a sudden change took place.

In a few moments the wolves had deserted not only the raft, but also the ice on the river. All the black bodies dispersed, and it was soon certain that they had in all haste regained the shore.

Wolves, like other beasts of prey, require darkness for their proceedings, and at that moment a bright light illuminated the entire river.

It was the blaze of an immense fire. The whole of the small town of Poshkavak was burning. The Tartars were indeed there, finishing their work. From this point they occupied both banks beyond Irkutak. The fugitives had by this time reached the dangerous part of their voyage, and they were still thirty versts from the capital.

It was now half-past eleven. The raft continued to glide on amongst the ice, with which it was quite mingled, but gleams of light sometimes fell upon it. The fugitives stretched on the platform did not permit themselves to make a movement by which they might be betrayed.

The conflagration was going on with frightful rapidity. The houses, built of fir-wood, blazed like torches—a hundred and fifty flaming at once. With the crackling of the fire were mingled the yells of the Tartars. The old boatman, getting a foothold on a near piece of ice, managed to shove the raft towards the right bank, by doing which a distance of from three to four hundred feet divided it from the flames of Poshkavsk.

Nevertheless, the fugitives, lighted every now and then by the glare, would have been undoubtedly perceived, had not the incendiaries been too much occupied in their work of destruction.

It may be imagined what were the apprehensions of Jolivet and Blount when they thought of the combustible liquid on which the raft floated.

Sparks flew in millions from the houses, which resembled so many glowing furnaces. They rose among the volumes of smoke to a height of five or six hundred feet. On the right bank, the trees and cliffs exposed to the fire looked as if they likewise were burning. A spark falling on the surface of the Angara would be sufficient to spread the flames along the current, and to carry disaster from one bank to the other. The result of this would in a short time be the destruction of the raft and all of those which it carried.

But, happily, the breeze did not blow from that side. It came from the east, and drove the flames towards the left. It was just possible that the fugitives would escape this danger.

The blazing town was at last passed. Little by little the glare grew dimmer, the crackling became fainter, and the flames at last disappeared behind the high cliffs which arose at an abrupt turn of the river.

By this time it was nearly midnight. The deep gloom again threw its protecting shadows over the raft. The Tartars were there, going to and fro near the river. They could not be seen, but they could be heard. The fires of the outposts burned brightly.

In the mean time it had become necessary to steer more carefully among the blocks of ice.

The old boatman stood up, and the moujiks resumed their poles. They had plenty of work, the management of the raft becoming more and more difficult as the river was further obstructed.

Michael Strogoff had crept forward.

Aloide Jolivet followed him.

Both listened to what the old boatman and his men were saying.

'Look out on the right!'

'There are blocks drifting on to us on the left!'

'Fend! fend off with your boathook!'

'Before an hour is past we shall be stopped . . .!'

'If it is God's will,' answered the old man. 'Against His will there is nothing to be done.'

'You hear them,' said Aloide.

'Yes,' replied Michael, 'but God is with us.'

The situation became more and more serious. Should the raft be stopped, not only would the fugitives not reach Irkutsk, but they would be obliged to leave their floating platform, for it would be very soon smashed to pieces in the ice. The osier ropes would break, the fir trunks torn asunder would drift under the hard crust, and the unhappy people would have no refuge but the ice-blocks themselves. Then, when day came, they would be seen by the Tartars, and massacred without mercy!

Michael returned to the spot

where Nadia was waiting for him. He approached the girl, took her hand, and put to her the invariable question: 'Nadia, are you ready?' to which she replied as usual:

'I am ready!'

For a few versts more the raft continued to drift amongst the floating ice. Should the river narrow, it would soon form an impassable barrier. Already they seemed to drift slower. Every moment they encountered severe shocks or were compelled to make detours—now to avoid running foul of a block, there to enter a channel of which it was necessary to take advantage. At length the stoppages became still more alarming. There were only a few more hours of night. Could the fugitives not reach Irkutsk by five o'clock in the morning, they must lose all hope of ever getting there at all.

At half-past one, notwithstanding all efforts, the raft came up against a thick barrier and stuck fast. The ice, which was drifting down behind it, pressed it still closer, and kept it motionless, as though it had been stranded.

At this spot the Augara narrowed, it being half its usual breadth. This was the cause of the accumulation of ice, which became gradually soldered together, under the double influence of the increased pressure and of the cold, of which the intensity was redoubled. Five hundred feet beyond the river widened again, and the blocks, gradually detaching themselves from the floe, continued to drift towards Irkutsk. It was probable that, had the banks not narrowed, the barrier would not have formed, and the raft would have been able to continue its course with the current. But the misfortune was irreparable, and the fugitives were

compelled to give up all hope of attaining their object.

Had they possessed the tools usually employed by whalers to cut channels through the ice-fields, had they been able to get through to where the river widened, they might have been saved. But they had not a saw, not a pickaxe; they had nothing which was capable of making the least incision in the ice, made as hard as granite by the excessive frost.

What were they to do?

At that moment several shots on the right bank startled the unhappy fugitives. A shower of balls fell on the raft. The devoted passengers had been seen. Immediately afterwards shots were heard fired from the left bank. The fugitives, taken between two fires, became the mark of the Tartar sharpshooters. Several were wounded, although in the darkness it was only by chance that they were hit.

'Come, Nadia,' whispered Michael in the young girl's ear.

Without making a single remark, 'ready for anything,' Nadia took Michael's hand.

'We must cross the barrier,' he said, in a low tone. 'Guide me, but let no one see us leave the raft.'

Nadia obeyed. Michael and she glided rapidly over the floe in the obscurity, only broken now and again by the flashes from the muskets.

Nadia crept along in front of Michael. The shot fell around them like a tempest of hail, and pattered on the ice. Their hands were soon covered with blood from the sharp and rugged ice over which they clambered, but still on they went.

In ten minutes the other side of the barrier was reached. There the waters of the Augara again flowed freely. Several pieces of

ice, detached gradually from the floe, were swept along in the current down towards the town.

Nadia guessed what Michael wished to attempt. One of the blocks was only held on by a narrow strip.

‘Come,’ said Nadia.

And the two crouched down together on the piece of ice, which their weight immediately detached from the floe.

It began to drift. The river widened, the way was open.

Michael and Nadia heard the shots, the cries of distress, the yells of the Tartars. Then, little by little, the sounds of agony and of ferocious joy grew faint in the distance.

‘Our poor companions!’ murmured Nadia.

For half an hour the current hurried along the block of ice which bore Michael and Nadia. They feared every moment that it would give way beneath them. Swept along in the middle of the current, it was unnecessary to give it an oblique direction until they

drew near the quays of Irkutsk.

Michael, his teeth tight set, his ear on the strain, did not utter a word; never had he been so near his object. He felt that he was about to attain it!

Towards two in the morning a double row of lights glittered on the dark horizon, in which were confounded the two banks of the Augara.

On the right hand were the lights of Irkutsk; on the left, the fires of the Tartar camp.

Michael Strogoff was not more than half a verst from the town.

‘At last!’ he murmured.

But suddenly Nadia uttered a cry.

At the cry Michael stood up on the ice, which was wavering. His hand was extended up the Augara. His face, on which a bluish light cast a peculiar hue, became almost fearful to look at; and then, as if his eyes had been opened to the bright blaze—

‘Ah!’ he exclaimed, ‘then Heaven itself is against us!’

(To be continued.)



THE WOODMAN'S CRAFT.

O, THE woodman's craft is a goodly craft,
He sings through sun and showers ;
As strong and brown as his hatchet's haft,
As simple as the flowers :
Of pleasure or toil he nothing lacks,
As he carols his song and he swings his axe
In spring-deck'd forest-bowers.

When all the winds of March are blown,
And apple-boughs are budding ;
When swallows from the South have flown,
And little clondlets, scudding
Across the sun, scarce dim his rays,
Full merry and fair are the woodland ways
When April streams are flooding.

With throstlecocks the groves ring out ;
Round hut and byre and shieling,
High, low, and near, and round about,
The blue-back'd birds are wheeling ;
And saucily boasting his robber name,
The cuckoo pries, nor stints for shame,
Where eggs are for the stealing.

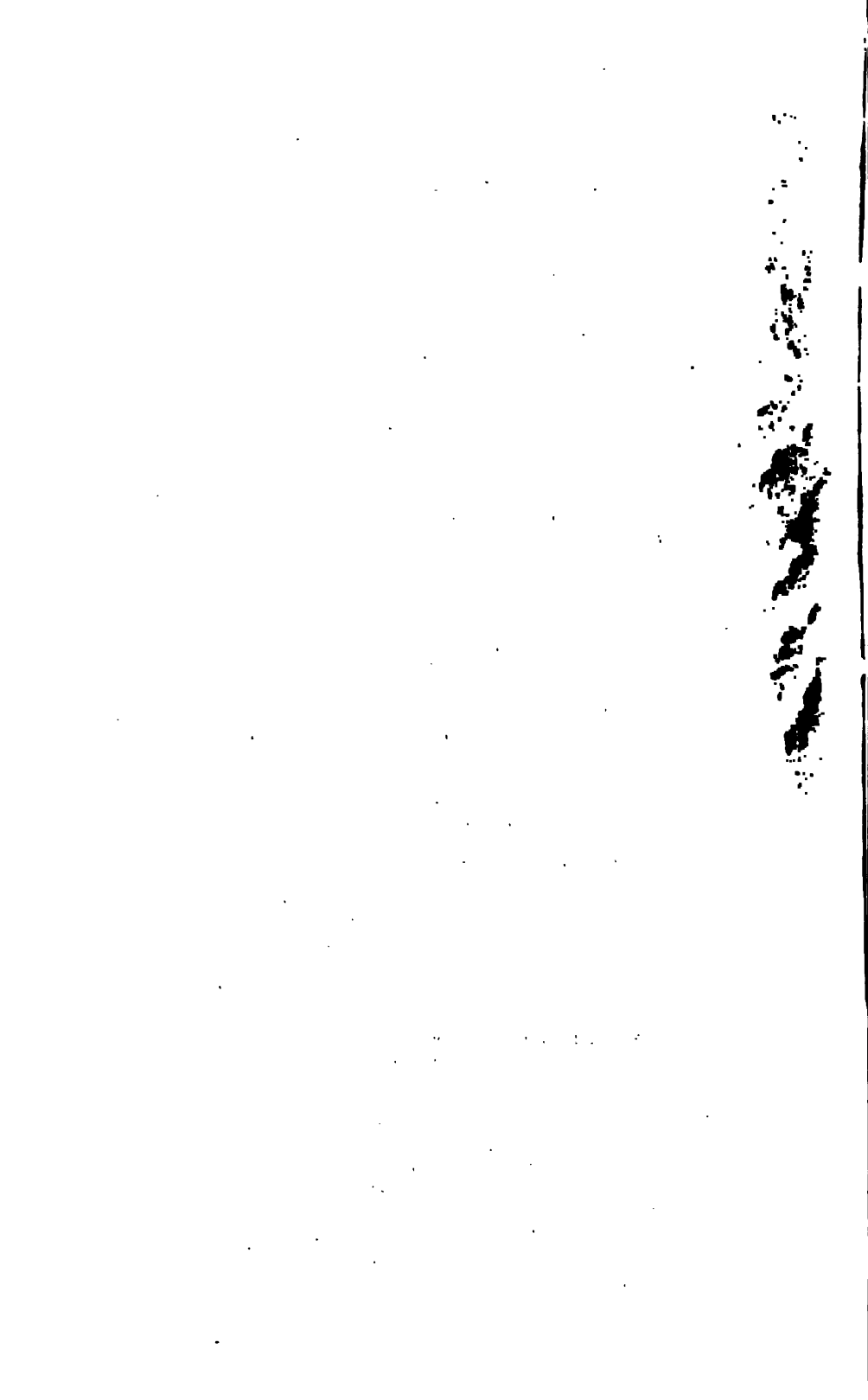
Beneath the ash, whose barren head
Still looms all dark and frowning,—
Beneath the gracious green and red
That makes the young oak's crowning,—
Last autumn's leaves can scarcely hide
The tufts of primrose, morning-eyed,
With cloak of winter's browning.

Then merrily ring the axes' keen
Where stalwart arms are swinging ;
And goodly shows the broad blade's sheen,
The sunbeams backward flinging,
As thicket's marge and hidden glades
Ring clearer than the ringing blades
With woodmen's jovial singing.

A goodly craft, and a gentle craft,
And a craft no evil fearing,
Is theirs who live by helve and haft
Where thickets are for clearing,
As the good man's hatchet swings aloft,
And the good wife sings from the binding-croft,
When summer days are nearing.

B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING.



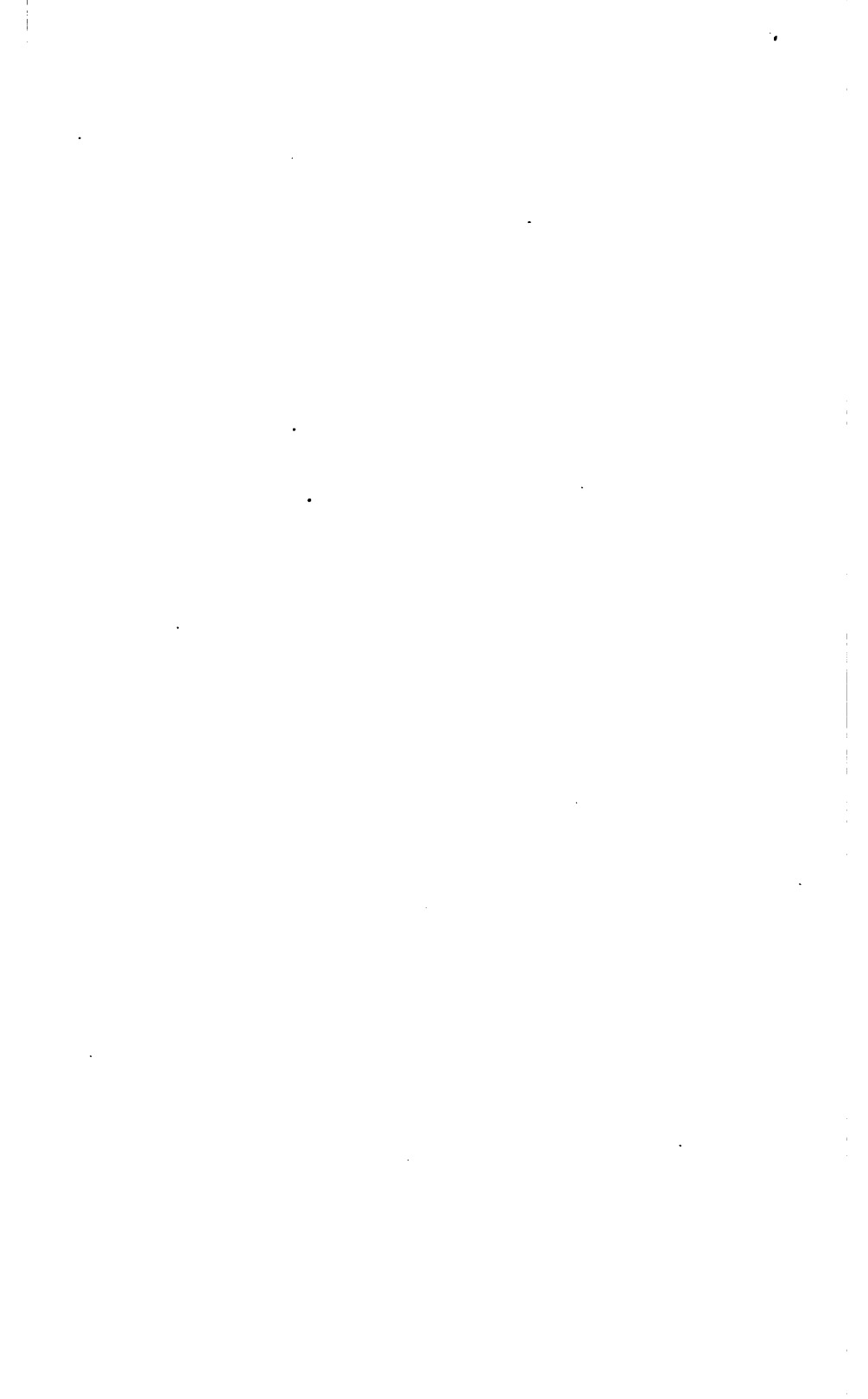




From the Painting]

THE WOODMAN'S CRAFT.

[by COROT.



PROUD MAISIE.

CHAPTER X.

‘YES.’

‘A faint sea, without wind or sun;
A sky like flameless vapour dun;
A valley like an unseal’d grave,
That no man cares to weep upon,
Bare, without boon to crave
Or flower to save.’

Was there a storm in the air?
The sky was smooth, the light
dull but steady. Not a bough
stirred, not a sound broke the
dead calm of field, flood, and fell.

But what a strange oppressive
atmosphere! Flowers closed their
petals and shrank as if from a
blight; leaves drooped and quivered.
The sea itself had grown
torpid, the low waves rolling
softly, lazily over on the beach,
as if each were the last that would
trouble itself to break. All the
springs of life seemed checked, the
very elements sunk in a lethargy.

I had gone down into the town
on an errand for my mother, and
in returning took a longer way
across the downs. The prevailing
languor was upon me. I
seated myself on the grass near
the cliff’s edge and there remained,
letting the afternoon hours slip
by unheeded. Something of a
like stupor had come over my
mind of late.

Hilda’s visit to the Gerards was
paid. She had gone thither in all
the plenitude of health and spirits,
of coquetry and silk attire. Selfish
and calculating beneath as a
keen sportsman, she showed a
certain excitement in the chase
that might pass for feeling. I
had read in her eyes before she left
for the Priory that she had made
up her mind to be its mistress, to

blind the sight and enslave the
heart of its master, no easy task
even for her.

She fails, of course, and virtue
reigns triumphant. He sees
through the mask, and turns away
disenchanted. Insincerity will out,
and the selfishness, design, empty
corrupt nature so thinly veneered
by frank *abandon* must disenchant
the fastidious lover—honourable,
high-minded, proud, unimpeach-
able Jasper Gerard.

Is it so?

The priest who suddenly doubts
the faith he worships, that alone
reconciles him to life, and to
which he has freely sacrificed life’s
pleasures and prizes; the sailor
whose trusted boat springs a leak
in mid-ocean; the English travel-
ler experiencing his first earth-
quake,—not these know a more
paralysing, staggering sensation of
new and monstrous fear than that
which strikes us at the first percep-
tion of life in full face. We kick,
we bemoan, we protest, we submit
or rebel, according to our respec-
tive dispositions. It is no matter.
There lies the fact. We must
accept it or die. But who cares
which? Helplessly we look around
and ask, ‘Can such things be?’

The sea-gulls answered me to-
day, with their harsh monotonous
cries. Numbers of these wild
strong creatures were hovering
round the cliffs with a restless
aimless flight. All about me on
land was a waste, sad and bare as
a cemetery. I only saw torn but-
terflies with battered wings flut-
tering here and there, lamed and
torpid bees clinging to the grass
stems, flowers stunted by the late

cold winds, and, below on the rocks, the gasping zoophytes left dry by the retreating tide. It was all one repulsive picture of the merciless in life, the side to which we shut our eyes as long as we can.

Presently a thin sea-fog came drifting across, blown by some imperceptible breeze, blurring all objects in the landscape, which, seen through it, become large and shapeless. Thin shrubs turn to trees, hillocks of stones to rocks, and the distant figures of two riders approaching along the sands look like giant ghosts.

Mechanically I followed them with my eyes as they drew nearer. Suddenly they rode out of the mist, and I recognised Hilda and Jasper Gerard.

Leisurely they passed along the sands till, just underneath the point where I sat watching them, they turned their horses' heads towards the cliff. A bridle-path here led up by windings to the downs. They passed quite near me, but, screened by a mound, I escaped unnoticed. Besides, they were fully occupied by each other.

At the top of the cliff they reined in their horses and halted for a few minutes to look at the sea-view, I looking at them and taking in more worldly wisdom in those five minutes than one does often in half a dozen years of experience.

The shattering of one's heart's creed, that gives such a shock to one's moral system, yet comes but in the shape of the fulfilment of one's lip creed. The two are mostly at variance. There are hackneyed, stereotyped, social formula of scepticism, stock cynical doctrines respecting the inconsistency of men and maidens, the despotic power of beauty, the inequality of love, which youth most readily bandies about, but is yet

none the less startled and stunned to find true.

Presently the riders turned and moved off over the downs in the direction of Bellairs. The mist drifting after them soon hid them from sight, and I was left to my own thoughts again—to a last look upon a dead past, a waste now, through which figures, incidents, feelings, that were once fraught with vital beauty and charm, filed on, like some grotesque masque, in arrant mockery.

I thought of the summer, when he sought me out, and we spent hours and hours together, hours that seemed to have gathered and held the essence of my whole being. What was the witchcraft that had gradually taken hold of all the strongest feelings in my nature, calling out others undreamt of before in my philosophy, turning all the forces within me into this one channel, this one sovereign passionate care?

All for a man who could never have loved me at all. Or it would never have melted away thus, at a glance, a smile, a word from Hilda.

'The more deceived,' said I, with a laugh. What is truth? Does instinct lie, and speak of affinity when no such thing exists?

I was lost in the hopeless maze of contradictions. But what power has 'it ought not' over 'it is'?

It might be true that his love should have been mine, not hers; but he worshipped her, not me. He worshipped he knew not what, but there is no bitterer mockery than such comfort as that. He may live to hate her, but the link between us is broken for ever.

The darkness and chill from the falling dew roused me at last, and I started to find it so late. I rose with an effort. My head ached, and my thoughts seemed beyond the control of my will.

News, great news.

Not public, but private and personal, so much was evident. My mother's face brightened as she spoke, looking up from a letter just opened as we sat over the breakfast-table the next morning. Even the twins grinned outright with delicious expectancy. News, bad or good, about one's friends and acquaintance is always welcome as a break on the monotony of existence, which somewhat mitigates the sense of La Rochefoucauld's savage-sounding maxim, and explains why it is a disappointment even to some really well-disposed persons to read over the deaths in the *Times* without finding a single familiar name among the list.

But gladder than death is matrimony to the female mind. My mother positively beamed upon us, as she proceeded deliberately, 'Hilda Jarvis is going to be married—to—to— Now guess, Maisie.'

I shook my head.

'Mr. Gerard—Jasper Gerard. Why, Maisie, that must be your friend.'

'Jasper Gerard?' I repeated mechanically. 'Yes, it must be the same.'

"Not what is called a brilliant alliance," she continued, reading aloud from Lady Jarvis's letter; "still, connections, property, character, everything in short, thoroughly satisfactory."

'Dear me, Maisie, do you hear? Why, what a chance you've missed!' put in Claude parenthetically, in compassionate tones.

"It might naturally be expected that we should look higher for our darling child. But I shrink from the idea of crossing her affections."

'Humbug!' ejaculated Ethel.

"And even should her father hesitate to give his consent, I

shall use my influence to overcome his reluctance and turn the scale."

'What a fuss!' quoth Claude the irrepressible; 'Gerard's a moneyed man, I know. What's it all for, mamma? To get a good settlement for Miss Hilda.'

'Hush, hush; for shame! "If our dear one's happiness depends upon marrying Mr. Gerard, she shall do so, worldly considerations notwithstanding."'

'Mrs. Gerard has found her match,' said I grimly. The sound of my own voice startled me. It was harsh, unnatural. Why should this news—it was none to me—affect me at all? It was only killing the dead. Yet it is difficult to believe that the dead don't feel being trampled on and mutilated.

They fell to talking and gossiping, mother and the twins, and Eva chimed in, kindly, to spare me. I was thinking vaguely how fortunate it was that I had caught cold last evening in the damp, that a sleepless feverish night and headache had been the result, sufficient in themselves to account for a somewhat battered appearance, and absence of mind.

Hypocrisy, even social, has a limit. My mother drove over to Bellairs that afternoon to express her congratulations in person, taking the twins with her, but not me. I went for a walk with Eva. She was grave, affectionate, considerate, loyal to the last; indignant with Hilda, furious with Jasper. Her seriousness only incited me to the wildest levity both of feeling and expression.

'Do you think he really loves her?' she asked, half taken in at last by my cool, flippant, indifferent comments.

'To be sure,' said I, 'after his manner. Every man has a "manner" in love, I suppose, as in art. Jasper Gerard has one of his own.'

Ask Hilda. It is not hers ; and I call it a credit to her versatility that she has been able to play up to it so well. Eva, I wonder how many hearts on an average a marriage crushes out of existence, like the animalculæ in a kettle of boiling water.'

'Hearts are tougher, Maisie.'

'No, dear, no. Only men and women can live on without them, and the outside world don't miss them when they are gone. But ah, Hilda, Hilda!'

'Most unsuited to him, I should say.'

'Like to like, dear ; education to education ; wealth to wealth ; fashion to fashion.'

'She must love him very much,' sighed Eva sentimentally.

I turned to her, with a laugh. 'Must she? Why? He is agreeable, sought after, and a good *parti*. He proposes, and she—well, she takes him. But love and matrimony have nothing to do together ; and he was a fool who first introduced them to each other. Her own confession of faith. She does well to act up to it. Her heart, such as it is—she has one—is not in this business. She does not love him at all, dear, but—' I checked myself. 'She loves his opposite,' was the sentence on my lips ; but I checked it. The secret was Hilda's. I shrank from revealing it even to Eva.

The party returned from Bellairs in a state of pleasing excitement, overflowing with news. The wedding, by general desire, was to come off as soon as possible. Long engagements are out of fashion, and, when both parties are well off, voted, and rightly, a bore. A reasonable time was to be allowed for presents to flow in and so forth ; but the pair were to be married in January, and from Bellairs.

'And you're to be bridesmaid, Maisie, think of that,' cried Ethel, adding disconsolately, 'She might have asked me too ; it would have been more civil.'

'Bridesmaid?'

'Yes,' said my mother artlessly ; 'it was her first, most particular request, and a very natural one. She is your earliest friend. You couldn't refuse. Indeed I thought you'd be delighted, and accepted for you.'

'Bridesmaid? I repeated again, and astonished them by bursting into a fit of laughter. 'O, it will be delightful, of course.' But everything seemed going so fast. Strangers yesterday, betrothed to-day, married to-morrow. What next?

So I accepted the honour and my position. We were to remain at Boregate until after the wedding ; but during the ensuing two months I seldom saw my earliest friend. She was entirely taken up with the business pleasures of choosing her trousseau, receiving presents and complimentary calls.

Jasper was not allowed to see much of her ; but now and then they might be met riding together. Hilda, a fearless and admirable rider, never showed to such advantage as on horseback. Everybody agreed that her beauty had improved. The most critical lover by her side might be forgiven for fancying himself in paradise—if it were only the paradise of fools.

CHAPTER XI.

A BRIDAL.

'Bell, thou soundest merrily
When the bridal party
To the church doth hie.'

THE merriment, most assuredly, is in the ear of him that hears it. To many of the young officers in the neighbouring marine bar-

racks at Lockhaven no funeral knell probably ever sounded so dolefully as Hilda's wedding-peals.

For my part, I have never been able to find anything exhilarating in bells. Chimes are melancholy; tolls dismal; peals exasperating, dinning joy into our ears, and flaunting its colours into our faces whether we will or no.

All Boregate must wear the livery of mirth in honour of its queen, Hilda, on this her wedding-day, and does so unanimously, even the weather. There is first a gaudy sunshine, reflected everywhere from the flake-white surface of road and cliff, remorselessly laying bare the skeleton trees in all the naked anatomy of their dry bones, on which it is hard to believe that the spirit of spring can ever breathe again to clothe them. Next, a steady piercing north wind, sharp-edged as broken glass, which wards off clouds and shadows, mists and dews, and whirls up the dead leaves from the frozen ground.

The wind had kept me awake the night long. I rise early, feeling strangely tired, giddy, and ill at first. Then it goes off.

Ten o'clock, and I stand before the glass and congratulate myself that at least I am *looking* well to-day, which is more than can have been said of me for some time past. My mother, though naturally unobservant, had remarked on the change occasionally, when I forgot to eat, and showed signs of having omitted to sleep. I laid everything on the climate of Boregate, which, in spite of its perverse reputation for being bracing in summer and mild in winter, failed to justify its character most years. But I had never been ill in my life; and of all imaginable times to choose for breaking down, the present was

the most inconvenient. The fear of it, perhaps, kept it off a while. This morning my quantum of colour is there on each cheek; my eyes are absolutely bright. 'You look quite pretty, Maisie, upon my word,' I exclaimed; 'ready and primed for your part. Keep it up for twelve hours more, if you can. After that, the flood.'

Half-past ten, and I put on my dress—girlish and unpretending, of course. White muslin and holly-berries—'seasonable, and so becoming,' sing a *sotto-voce* chorus of housemaids, as I arrive at Bel-lairs. But the most artless bridesmaid cannot flatter herself that she will outshine the bride this morning.

So be it. Hilda is queen of the day. By all means let her reign it out.

Eleven o'clock, and we eight shivering maids of honour start off, and are driven to the church porch, where we dismount and group, feeling, no doubt, excessively young and innocent, but looking only simpering and silly. My companions shiver, and remark how cold it is. I feel no chill; on the contrary, am grateful for that sharp breeze from the north striking my temples, icy and refreshing, and taking the weight from my head.

The knot of people grows larger and larger. Chaperons arrive, in stiff bran-new silks of all the last colours, overloaded with lace and jewelry. Men, young and old, are fidgeting about. Jasper is somewhere among them, I suppose, but I do not look for him. Not from any fear of myself on that score. I seem to have no feeling left, no more than a puppet. I am holding the wires and pulling them with my own hand; and fortunately *can* hold them, so far. But the day has

only begun, and already looking on makes me dizzy; my very thoughts are feverish and unnatural.

I hear his voice sometimes, and can easily guess the face he presents to-day. Quiet—he can keep his emotions under lock and key—but with a subdued radiance breaking through, perfectly self-possessed and at ease. Was ever British bridegroom thus before? All eyes are upon him, but Argus itself would not disconcert Jasper. What does he care for that motley crowd? A mob is a mob, however well born and well dressed.

Last and chiefest comes Hilda, outshining even our expectations by her beauty and bridal array. She glides up the aisle, leaning on Sir John's arm, and, beyond question, the most composed person present. She is satisfied; she is even happy, in a sense, but not as Jasper is. That I know and feel, and it gives me the strangest pleasure.

The ceremony proceeds, and from beginning to end she plays her part to admiration. Never has that little drama,—tragedy, comedy, farce—it partakes of all three—been more consummately acted throughout by its heroine. We spectators might have been excused had we forgotten ourselves in our approbation, applauded and cried *bis* by mistake. For no one could apply the word solemn to the solemnisation of matrimony as it went on in Boregate parish church that morning.

Vanity Fair and religious service, Worth and St. Peter, struggling for the mastery. On the one hand the decent mourning of the bride's bereaved family; on the other, the frank amusement of outsiders. Romance and platitudes, the serious and the hopelessly ludicrous, meet and clash

together in the edifying spectacle, and the serio-comic result is at least unique.

But from this hash of jarring impressions my mind escaped one instant. There came a moment when I saw neither church nor clergyman, weeping mammas, titting youths, nor tremulous bridesmaids. All these, and even the beautiful bride, were away, when my spirit sentenced itself, as it were, for the last time, to stand in judgment on Jasper as he began to speak.

And in the midst of crowding sensations, too violent, too conflicting to be analysed, there was a minute of calm and light.

Say I had loved him. I had done well. I was glad, and only glad of it, as I saw him standing there, erect, confident, lifting up his head with the proud but unconscious air of the lord and master that men forgave in him and women loved.

Not without cause had I made him the god of my idolatry. All that was of most worth in him Hilda would do her best to stifle. Perhaps that better part was even hidden from her. It was that which had won me. It held me still.

For, was it a glad, was it a deadly conviction? I felt that though I might live very long, and see very much, I should never yield up my will again, as I had yielded it there—never.

All this whilst he was speaking the words that bound him to Hilda till death.

They are spoken, and the light is gone.

If only I could keep the train of queer grotesque fancies from crowding and pressing into my head. 'Great wits to madness nearly are allied.' One may flatter oneself thus; but the idea becomes unpleasant when the

balance threatens decidedly to incline on the mad side. For one moment I am blind; the next, we are leaving the church in an orderly file; now we are back in the porch, and I am talking in a rather light-headed manner to my companion bridesmaids, who themselves are too flurried by far to note what nonsense I may let fall from my lips.

It is all over, but I do not realise it. Everything is unreal to-day. We are back again at Bellairs, and Lady Jarvis is begging me to do the honours of the wedding presents to some of her guests in the library. I consent, and go towards the room to join them, when a curious feeling overtakes me, and warns me to give myself a few minutes' rest first. Hilda's boudoir happens to be empty. Instinctively I step in. After that, a blank.

I had fainted, but soon recovered, to find myself on the sofa, and one of the housemaids dashing cold water in my face and wringing her hands at intervals. She seemed of a nervous temperament, and I 'came to' just in time to prevent her from spreading the alarm.

'For lor, miss, I did think you was gone when I saw you lying there as white as your own muslin. It gave me such a turn.'

I laughed, contrived to reassure her, declared it was nothing—I had a cold and was tired. But fainting had never been one of my bad habits. I had startled myself by my exploit, and began wondering vaguely what I should do next. Have an illness: die, perhaps. But last till to-morrow morning I must and would. I made the servant promise to hold her tongue, took a glass of wine, and joined the company again.

The long hours of the breakfast dragged through, the longer hours

afterwards. It was four o'clock when the bride and bridegroom departed. They were going to Lockhaven, to start thence for the Continent the next day. Hilda, a bright creature in silks and furs, looking the conquering heroine every inch of her, bade us adieu all round. Jasper—it *was* Jasper, I suppose—at parting shook hands cordially with everybody, with me among the rest. Not that at the moment he knew hands apart in that Briareus of a crowd.

But the end was not yet. I thought it never would come. I could have rested now, but would not. There was to be a dance in the evening, and I felt as if, were I to relax for one minute, I should probably not be able to lift up my head again; and I was bent on playing out what I had begun to the very last. There was an unnatural pleasure, too, in constraining myself to make merry with the rest, especially when Jasper's mother was near.

So I worked up my spirits to the utmost, chattered, joked with the officers, cut cake, made myself generally useful and agreeable, heard Lady Jarvis call me invaluable, a little treasure—and, what was worth more, balm in Gilead in its way, Mrs. Gerard affirming in a whisper that that Miss Noel was a little flirt.

But every hour brought fresh cautions in the shape of novel and unpleasant sensations. Odd flashes of light came darting before my eyes, my head swam. It was eight o'clock when the dance began; the party was not to break up till twelve.

Eva, who was again staying with us at Boregate, had been invited for the evening. She arrived early. I happened to meet her in the hall, and remember her startled face as she caught sight of me.

'Maisie,' in an anxious whisper,

'what is the matter? Has anything happened?'

'Why?' said I, laughing. 'Now don't, please, say I look as if I had escaped from a hospital.'

'You are flushed, but white underneath.'

'Like a badly-rouged ballet-girl,' I muttered. 'Complimentary.'

'You have dark rings under your eyes.'

'In short, I look a fright,' said I impatiently.

We were going towards the drawing-room. Opposite us was a large mirror, where I met the reflection of a figure, methought that of a stranger. Only for an instant: *I* moved, *it* moved, and with a start and a disagreeable nervous thrill I recognised myself.

'Maisie, thou art translated, thou art changed,' I murmured, aghast. 'There's a phantom bridesmaid for you, Eva. We've heard of a phantom bride before, but this is a new and happy thought. Put it down for an old ballad with an illustration.'

'Give up the dance, Maisie; come home with me.'

Give up the dance? Never, I am positive, was girl more set in her heart upon her first ball than I upon that merry meeting. I was bent on crowning the task I had set myself of thwarting Mrs. Gerard's cold penetration, and of killing at their birth certain little suspicions, innuendoes, hints, conjectures, that arise with so little provocation to the lips of one's kind friends, and which I was ready to imagine, perhaps, almost before they were intended. Should I give in thus at the eleventh hour?

'Never. I've lots of nerve left. Don't be afraid about me, Eva. I feel quite well now. It was the

cold in the church that gave me a chill this morning.'

So the dance, the bouquet to our gala-day, began. I had succeeded in working myself up to a pitch of artificial excitement which in its turn sustained me triumphantly through those three or four hours. I danced without stopping, though I should have been puzzled to name my partners afterwards. From time to time when I passed Eva I caught her anxious glances cast at me, and answered with a mechanical smile, wondering vacantly what they meant.

And so on into the hours of the night, and still they were banging the waltzes, and still the tarlatan and ribbons were flying round the room.

Suddenly I seemed to lose my breath. But for my partner I should have staggered and fallen. He stopped, perceiving I was faint; we were close to one of the large plate-glass windows, and he instantly pushed it open, observing that the air would revive me. I leaned back against the casement. Just at that moment, through the still wintry air, struck the sound of the distant church bells. It was midnight. I shivered involuntarily.

'Some one is walking over your grave,' I heard my partner say, laughing.

It was the hour appointed for breaking up. Eva had found her way to my side, and in what seemed a very few minutes she had brought me away, and we were alone in our Boregate fly, driving home.

I was suffocating, and leaned out of the window. Was there a curse upon that land? O the cold bleak wide monotonous expanse, inexpressibly dreary in the sharp glassy moonlight, the white

barren cliffs, clodded fields, the dull cold sea !

I seemed to see everything we passed distorted ; the squalid cottages, blasted oaks, the gleaming lighthouse, took strange and hideous shapes, like the grotesque creations of a Doré, in my disordered brain. It was a prolonged nightmare. Then I began talking fast and gaily, not much to the purpose, I should say.

We reached home at last, and I was rallying Eva on her evident and increasing nervous anxiety. As we dismounted, my mother, who was sitting up, came to meet me in the hall, and the twins rushed out of their room, clamouring to hear all the particulars both of the religious ceremony and secular entertainment. I hardly know what happened. They say I was crossing the hall, pointing to Eva's pale scared countenance and laughing heartily, when all of a sudden the whole over-taxed nervous fabric gave way, and I fell down just as if I had been shot.

CHAPTER XII.

GOOD-NIGHT AND GOOD-MORROW.

*'Plaisir d'amour ne dure qu'un moment ;
Chagrin d'amour dure toute la vie.'*

It was not to be. Euthanasia is a merciful invention of man. The gods withhold it. After having learnt the tyranny of a love, we have to learn the still stronger tyranny of life.

There is a sort of compensation, a set-off against the darkness of our worst hours, to be found in the fact that death then loses its terrors, and there is an end of that clinging to hope and earth which made their end such a fearful thing to look forward to. Six months ago I should have seen, in the danger that threatened me

now, the loathsome skeleton with scythe and hour-glass, and not all the resignation nor fatalism nor stoicism I could muster—nor yet faith, nor the dream of heaven, nor any of the gilding wherewithal we gild our sepulchres—would have availed to make the thought of his coming endurable.

But now the saddest words ever written, 'There is neither work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest,' had lost all their sadness, and sounded like a promise, a lure, even sweet. Freedom of spirit, forgetfulness, was the one thing I longed for—the one thing life could not offer, and death could.

It was not for me, though. After many weeks of tedious illness, resulting more from a general breakdown of the system than any specific disorder, I began to recover. I had but the faintest recollection of all that had passed since the day of the wedding ; but it appeared that, on the following morning, I had seemed somewhat better, and was particularly anxious that our move to London, which had been fixed for that day, should on no account be deferred. The journey had proved the last straw. The day after, I was in the doctor's hands, there to remain, as it proved, for some months.

At first it was a serious matter, and no wonder. I had been recklessly imprudent once too often ; exposed myself, caught cold, neglected it, gone on, living upon a spurious excitement, a worse dram than absinthe, scarcely eating or sleeping, braced up by sheer force of will, and must pay accordingly. Nature had her revenge. But after a time I observed that people entered my room with a firmer step, spoke to me in their natural voices, the ill-disguised anxiety vanished from their countenances, and I saw that the danger was over.

Saw it with apathetic indifference. But as utter mental and physical prostration is the common convalescent state after such an illness, nobody was alarmed or astonished at mine.

Until it had lasted too long. It seemed as though it never would wear off. I was young, and ought to rally; but gave no sign. Weeks went by, and one thing after another was tried, but still there was no pretence of real cure, no return of activity and nervous force.

One day, when the doctor had been sitting with me for some time, shaking his head over my non-progress, and puzzled by my heartless flippant talk, I asked him seriously if he saw in me the slightest chance of an approach towards ever becoming a useful, not to say an ornamental, member of society again.

He was a shrewd man. I believe he had, by this time, become aware that he was called upon to minister to a mind diseased, and felt the delicacy of the task.

'You want a change,' said he.

I shook my head incredulously.

'Do you ever go abroad?'

'Never.'

'Then go,' said he bluntly; 'nothing else that I know of will set you right.'

'Will that?' I asked.

'It might,' the oracle would go no further; 'it ought to be tried. To whom ought I to speak about it—to you, or your mother?'

'To me, first,' said I promptly; 'and I can tell you beforehand that it is of no use. My eldest brother is coming home from Australia next month; and the twins' education must not be interfered with.'

'I don't want you to take your family abroad,' said he, laughing, and with a faint twinkle in his eye; 'I want somebody to take you right away from them and home

into new surroundings. Have you no old relative—aunt—who could go with you—or a friend, perhaps?'

'Eva,' said I mentally. The idea struck me as rather wild and vague. But he caught a smile.

'The first I've seen,' he said triumphantly. 'Now a friend you have.'

'One,' said I modestly.

'How old is she?'

'She is thirty.'

'Capital! Why not take her and start off together, you two? Ladies travel everywhere nowadays; and I feel sure that you would never be at a loss. Come, I know I'm not speaking to a French or a German young woman, who isn't allowed to look over a hedge, but to a sensible English girl.'

'Who may steal the horse,' said I, laughing outright this time, 'and without scandal.'

'Confess that you like the notion.'

I was silent. But in my heart I felt that nothing at least could be worse than the present deadlock. The plan was practicable, I supposed.

'Think of it,' he said; 'I shall come again to-morrow.'

I did think, and must admit him right. It was the best, perhaps the only, thing to be done.

He came the next day, and had a long conclave with my mother. What he said I never knew; but it must have been strong and startling, for she refused to tell me, but came forth from the interview thoroughly frightened and full of revived anxieties on my behalf. I was to go abroad then, and everything was settled as quickly as possible. Eva, it was arranged, would accompany me. She had some experience of travelling, and of the ways and means of foreign life. We were to go to Germany, because it was cheap;

to a certain capital, because it was cheaper even than other towns; and stay there for six months, or longer if found desirable, that is to say, if the change worked the wonders that were expected of it. By the middle of April I was reported strong enough to travel; all arrangements were made, and the day of starting was fixed.

For the last time we hie to the studio, to bid it farewell. Everything looks sad and dismantled. Some of the birds are gone, all are going, the flowers are fading from neglect; we have been too busy lately to attend to them. No tenant will succeed us in that attic; the house is very shortly to be pulled down to make room for new buildings. The sight is depressing; and though Eva considerably ignores the past and talks so kindly and cheerfully about the future, dwelling only upon that, telling me of how we shall enjoy our travels and the change and the sweets of freedom, and see and learn an infinite quantity of things, I know in her heart of hearts she is somewhat sore, and clinging wistfully to the last rag of memory of that *bon vieux temps* we are leaving behind us for ever and ever.

To me it already seems unconscionably far off. I can think it all over with the utmost indifference, our idyl at Westburn, the golden hours there enshrined, think of Jasper as married to Hilda, without a heart-burning, just as if the Maisie of a year ago were a third party, a romantic little *ingénue* that indulged in dreams, in trusting and believing things and people sometimes to be actually what they seemed, a creature quite apart from my present self. Not all of me, say what they might, had survived that illness.

We were just going to put out

the candles and leave the studio when music began below, and we lingered to listen. Von Zbirow, who had returned this spring, like the swallows, to his old roof, was treating us to a *capriccio* of his own,—wild and suggestive music, that spoke of love or joy, or grief or hope, or regret, or nothing at all, according to the listener's mood.

'Do you know,' remarked Eva suddenly, by and by, 'that all the time you were ill, Von Zbirow never omitted to send in to me here, to inquire after you every day.'

'Very attentive of him, I am sure, considering that he knows me only from meeting me on the landing.'

'He can talk English now. The other day he called, and we had quite a long conversation. I told him that we were going to Germany together and to Ludwigsheim; and he was delighted. It appears he spends half the year there; and he said that he hoped to meet us in the summer.'

I raised my head with a shade of interest. But what meant this slightly mysterious tone in which she spoke?

'I am persuaded that he is deeply smitten with you, Maisie,' resumed Eva playfully, 'to say nothing of your singing. He said he had so often heard you from his rooms.'

Von Zbirow concluded his *capriccio* at this moment, and I began, upon a sudden impulse, to clap my hands as loud as I could, in applause. Eva followed my lead innocently. I was not conscious of any ulterior design, I protest; but two minutes afterwards Von Zbirow, who must have ascended the stairs as noiselessly as a cat, knocked at the studio-door.

'Come in,' said I; and he entered.

I was reclining in our old oak

chair, looking, let us hope, pale and fragile, as an interesting invalid should; my illness, I was told, had not disfigured me much.

Von Zbirow bowed to Eva, and coming up to me said gently and cordially,

'I hope now to hear from yourself what your friend has already many times told me—that you are better; well, even. Is it so?'

'Well enough to enjoy your *capriccio*,' said I, with a languid smile, and raising my eyes, which, the twins assured me, had grown ever so much larger since my illness. 'Indeed, I think if I could have had a little of that music when I was at my worst, it would have been better, more reviving than ether.'

'Never too late,' said he. 'When you are in Germany, and fear a relapse is coming on, how glad should I be if once you would send for me to charm it away!'

'So you are returning to Ludwigsheim, I hear.'

'In a month I follow.'

'A month? But you may have forgotten us both before then,' said I, laughing.

'Wait only and you will see,' said he confidently; 'or it will perhaps be you who will not know me for an old friend when I come to call.'

I shook my head laughingly, thinking, 'Do not flatter yourself. There are certainly not two such odd-looking mortals as you in the world.' His was a face, however, that grew upon you, like some obscure but deeply significant poem. It was susceptible of an endless variety of expressions: you never knew which was coming next, and thus both curiosity and interest, at least, were roused and kept alive. At this very moment his countenance was relaxing in the strangest manner as he bent his eyes on me,

and I felt that I somehow was the cause.

I smiled. He smiled back from behind those most discreet of spectacles. I held the key of his face for the moment.

'Then it is *au revoir*,' said I. 'You will really and truly find us out? Now that will be something to look forward to.'

'For me,' said he politely.

'I meant for us.'

'For both, then.'

He shook hands cordially, and was tripping off, when suddenly he turned back, calling out,

'Be sure you take care for yourselves in Ludwigsheim. You can have the fever there as well as in London. The sun is one furnace, and the wind is one cold bath. Go never out without your cloaks, and drink plenty of the good wine. Sit not where there is a draught, and be on your guard how you forget yourself looking at the sunset.'

And he vanished. I threw myself back in my chair, and saw Eva gazing at me stupidly; puzzled, I suppose, by the tone the little scene just enacted had taken.

'Maisie, what possesses you?' she exclaimed.

'O, I am not mad,' I retorted. 'At least I think not—time will show.'

'What new mood is this?'

'Quite new, I grant,' said I recklessly, 'so give it a trial. Listen, Eva: what if I, like Hilda, have some curiosity to test my power? They say that slaves make tyrants afterwards, if they get the chance. I suppose I was a slave once, and can't forget it, and so may have developed a taste for tyranny. Do you think, now I am free, that I am the same as I was a year ago? Suppose I want to give measure for measure, suppose I want to entertain and

amuse myself at all costs, if they be other people's.'

'How can you talk so heartlessly?'

'Heartless! Cant, my dear. It is all a game. Nobody's heart is in it, or men and women would not play as they do; so why should I throw in mine?'

'Maisie!' reproachfully.

'Last year I knew nothing, Eva, and, what made things worse, fancied I knew the world and could fathom people. I thought that love made a vital part of life. What a fool I was! Why, those to whom it is must die—be improved off the face of the earth. Only those get on in the world who take it as a toy—to keep or throw away as may be most convenient. I'll be one of them, I think.'

'Hush, hush!'

'Hard hearted, did you call me?' I continued. 'Not a bit. At least I'm ready enough to be touched and converted. I ask nothing better than to fall in love with the first comer, if only he can make me. I'll second him up to a certain point. I want to see how far men will go in their half hypocrisy, but I'll not stake more in the game than they do themselves. If I can't take my cue from them entirely, it's unlikely that I shall risk my life's worth a second time. Don't look scandalised, Eva; I'm only speaking out what others think, or act upon, at least—men and women.'

'You don't mean what you say.'

'Give me credit for meaning wisdom when, for once in a way, I happen to speak it,' I retorted. However undesignedly, I had eaten of some tree of knowledge: all was changed to me henceforth. I saw a new heaven and a new earth, but the old were better.

Our preparations, our adieux were all made a few days after,

and we started on our voyage of discovery, for to me it was nothing less.

The constant traveller despises the first chapter of his journey, always the same in the main, word for word—London and Calais, Paris or Brussels, Cologne or Bâle. It becomes almost odious. He fancies he knows every yard of the road, and longs for the wings of a dove or the telegraph that he might skip that tiresome preface.

Eva had gone through it before. For me it had at least the hackneyed charm of novelty, as I stood on the steamer's deck watching the receding shore and thinking over the Channel lyrics, from the farewell sentimental of Marie Stuart and the farewell cynical of Byron downwards. I felt neither patriotic nor even bitter. Only as I gazed on the hard white dry cliffs of Lockhaven, ay, the cliffs of Boregate, until they faded out of sight, I felt as if, with them, my old self had faded too. Dead and buried that. The salt spray hides from view the familiar land we are forsaking, and I turn to the future in the ungainly form of that black monster boat, struggling hard with the tide, making head against it nevertheless, and steadily nearing the foreign shore.

CHAPTER XIII.

PASTURES NEW.

'He sat at the spinet and play'd,
He play'd, my beautiful soul with the
earnest eyes.'

Go in the spirit to Germany. Far away in the sunny south there lies a large, white, placid, æsthetic city; the German Athens they call it, a surname which jars on our ears like a paradox, much as though men were to talk of an

Arctic Eden or subterranean stars.

Somewhat apart from the main nucleus of squares, theatres, and palatial inns, half-way down a broad street of houses that look as if they were built of chalk, stands an arched gateway, like the entrance to the quadrangle of a French hôtel. Passing underneath, however, we find instead a garden railed off, and through the garden a little footpath leads up to a small white villa, standing detached and alone among the trees. Hidden away thus behind the street it lies there as quiet and secluded as a convent. The outside walls are thinly spread with creepers, the vestibule within is decorated with trim shrubs in pots, and ivy trails along the carved wooden sides of the staircase. The upper story is occupied by the German widow landlady to whom the house belongs, and her offspring. But her most presentable apartments on the first floor have now been let for some months to two young Englishwomen.

They are oftenest to be found elsewhere, in a studio, an isolated room standing outside in the garden a few steps from the porch. It had been built by a former tenant of Frau Richter's, a painter, now travelling in Italy, and the English lodgers who have succeeded to his workshop reap the benefit of its artistic paraphernalia of screens, tapestry, plaster casts, and an excellent piano, all to their mind, and all of which they have not failed to turn to good account.

They have puzzled the landlady; they puzzle her still. They live very quietly and properly, pass day after day in that out-of-door studio, seem to have made few acquaintances in Ludwigsheim, nor to care to make more; went out last night for the first time to

a *soirée*. They are both much too young, thinks Frau Richter, for such independence. They look so, at least. The elder of the two has a sobered manner, but shows no other sign of wear and tear. Neither is 'Madame.'

The good landlady is nonplused. Life for her has always gone on flowing in such regular, sing-song, simple metre and rhythm, from her doll to her needle, from sewing to the kitchen, from pots and pans to finding a husband. Wife, mother, nurse, cook, and housekeeper she has been, and any reasonable varieties of these types, however remote, might be brought within her comprehension, but nothing outside them for women. Travel, study, research, art, and thought, these appertain to man's *répertoire*.

Still, she has no complaint to make of her lodgers, and must allow that they are well-conducted young persons on the whole. Their visitors are few, though one is frequent enough to be sure. This unremitting guest is a man, an old man, an ugly man. Frau Richter marvels in her inmost soul that, if they did mean to make an exception, they should make it in favour of such a guy. She saw him walk up the garden not an hour ago, and said to herself for the hundredth time, what a strange little figure he was, in his long coat, broad-brimmed hat and spectacles, pipe in his mouth, and a large brown-paper parcel of music under his arm! He put the pipe into his pocket, and went into the studio. Well, there's no accounting for tastes, and they do say that Herr Carl von Zbirow is 'noble' by birth, and a most famous musician into the bargain.

Inside the studio see, first, Eva there in the shadow, a picturesque figure as ever, in her delightfully old-fashioned green-

velveteen dress, as she stands at her easel. Some portraits look as if they were starting into life. Eva suggests the reverse of the idea. She will never die, I tell her, but end after the manner of some Greek nymph of old. The god or demon Death, when bold enough to pursue, will, at the moment he thinks he clasps her, see her change and merge, graceful attitude, still countenance, and all, into a picture or statue.

She is painting, and serenely intent on her canvas—painting a little scene sketched long ago in pen and ink by Chateaubriand. Only a bullfinch's nest in a rose-bush. Under her brush it comes out as in the French poet's fanciful delineation, the nest like a nacreous shell, holding four blue pearls, and overhung by a rose wet with dew; the male bird perched motionless on a shrub, like a flower in purple and red. The group are seen again, reflected in the transparent waters of a pool below, under the dark shadow of a walnut-tree that forms a background to the little picture.

I am reclining on the sofa with a book in my hands, but my eyes are towards the piano, where Von Zbirow sits playing, quite at home in the post.

He has been a rare friend to us in Ludwigsheim since he took up his abode there last May. Punctual to his promise he sought us out immediately after his arrival, offered us plenty of useful advice and good introductions in the first instance, and, in the next, has accorded us what was worth more and has won us the veneration and envy of half the town—a great deal of his society. Von Zbirow has no family. Apart from his public engagements, he leads in a measure the life of a recluse, from which, it is said, whenever he vouchsafes to emerge, a terrible

quarrel with some of his fellow-professionals is sure to ensue, for the world gives him an ill name for an awful temper. He remains fast friends with us both notwithstanding.

He makes a curious study at this moment, the small man at the large piano—as it were a musical centaur. He has taken off his spectacles, and can see little now—for he is as blind as a mole—except with his sixth sense of perception, preternaturally quickened, I often think, by his limited vision.

The ideal of disdain—that is the impression given by his queer unsmiling face; such an intense delicate pride of expression as redeems grotesqueness, and imparts an unquestionable dignity to that extraordinary type.

Whilst he plays he is king,—the genius of his instrument. Von Zbirow has revealed undiscovered countries in piano-land. Under his enchanted touch that pale, cold, insipid musical machine wakes to find an orchestra in itself. Flute, horn, harp, organ, he can draw the tones of all by turns out of those chilly ivory keys. Many an expert, who thought he knew all they could do, has stood by Von Zbirow, and wondered, like a child at the miracles wrought by a conjurer. His hands are like separate organisms as they alternately crawl, dart, and bang over the keyboard, now languid, now ponderous, now airy, now electrical. He is pouring out, as he often does, the best treasures of his happy glorious genius all for us, a couple of girls. Such is his caprice; there is not another household in Ludwigsheim thus favoured.

Von Zbirow launched into a marvellous extemporised cadence, then wound up rather abruptly. A man again, and no longer a geni,

he wheeled round and glared at me.

'So, Picciola' (this was his nickname for me; he always avoided British appellations if possible. His English had wonderfully improved during the last two months, though still there was room). 'Do not I derange you—you and the friend there—at your occupations? True, isn't it?'

I shook my head and replied, 'On the contrary. Just as long as you are playing I feel busy, enthusiastic, I may say inspired. O, I set the world on fire. Corinne was a dunce to me. Only my genius always dies away with the last chord.'

'It is all too strange, the many odd prescriptions I have heard given for inspiration. Beethoven soused his hands in quite cold water. Lamennais plant himself before the red-hot stove. One fellow required all the noise of the ale-house to make march his ideas; another must compose only in a padded room; another want always a pack of cards; and yet another his wife beside him whilst he wrote, just for to stroke down his imagination when it grew too fierce,' he said, rising and coming leisurely to seat himself between us.

Von Zbirow had many moods, and was the slave of whichever happened to be in the ascendant—an impressionability which was part and parcel of his peculiar musical aptitude, and by repressing which, and cultivating an even temperament, his genius would have lost a spring—the mood depressed, the mood morose, the mood urbane, the mood genial, the mood sarcastic, the mood savage. To-day it was the mood genial, most emphatically preferable, except as a curious study, to the rest, and to which its rarity lent an extra value and charm.

'There has been silence in this studio for the space of one hour,' he began, 'except for Schumann's concerto in A. Once did I speak to Picciola, but she was so buried in the *roman* she is reading that she pretend not to hear.'

I showed him the book I held; it was upside down. He shook his head severely. More than once of late he had seen fit to lecture me very seriously on my objectless thriftless life.

'You are always the idle one. Did we but let you, you would leave singing to Meess Eva's birds and grasshoppers. How comes it, Picciola, you nor read, nor sew, nor paint, nor play?'

'Neither?'

'Have you no whim, no hobby-horse, not so much as a castle in the air to seek?'

'None. If ever I had, it is lost.'

'No aspirations in life, even?' he asked inquisitively.

'What aspirations could I have worth straining to realise?'

'There are so many prizes. Society'—disdainfully—'you young ladies have that game in your own hands.'

'The game of how to out-dress and out-flirt my neighbour. One can soon tire of that, *Meister*. The world may be very fascinating to those high up in it, who have acquired the taste, and who live for it. Power may be as intoxicating as brandy; but the rank and file of society, their battles and victories and prizes and pleasures, are weak stuff; too weak to turn my head.'

'Well, well. But why talk me of these? You know there are aims more serious, more noble.'

'Which shall it be?' said I provokingly. 'The repeal of the game-laws, the restoration of the Jews, or what do you say to

the emancipation of women? Herr Doctor, tell me the truth; can you carry your imagination so far as to think you see me lecturing from a platform, or flourishing a petition? You never will. It seems to me always like stamping to make the world go round faster.'

'Art, then, or literature. Have you no vanity to be played upon?' he continued, in desperation; 'not even the ambition to be an author?'

'For shame, *Meister*! Besides, every young English lady who makes her *début* in society writes her novel nowadays, as a matter of course—as an undergraduate takes his degree. It's no distinction. To be remarkable one should never put pen to paper. But leave me and my career, I beg and pray, and let us talk of something more entertaining—the *conversazione* last night.'

'Picciola, if all your life is going to be so dull as that *conversazione*, it will be pitiful indeed.'

'*Meister*, allow me to differ. I liked the *conversazione*, and particularly the lady with the very fair hair to whom you introduced us.'

'Ah, the Gräfin Sophie, Frau Merrydick. What for a name is that! But what better could she look for, since she must go marry an Englishman? I knew her since long, when she was Fräulein von Seckendorf. She was twelve year old, and I give her lessons. The Lord, how ill she play! But she is a sensible woman; she give it up so soon as her father let her.'

'Was the English husband there last night?'

'O, no, he don't show,' returned Von Zbirow innocently. Nothing could be more comical than slang falling occasionally, as it did, from his grave unsuspecting lips, and

at the most unseasonable moments, he taking it for the classical national English idiom.

'What does he do?'

'The Englishman? He smoke, he shoot, he drink beer, he play billiards, he hate parties. He seem fond of his wife, though, and she worship his leetle finger. They have been married now since four, five months. She had a large fortune, Fräulein von Seckendorf, and her father has a very ancient castle in Franconia, which he built there for himself.'

'Then how comes it to be ancient?'

'Well, it is made up in the Middle Ages style. I have stayed there myself. There are pictures of Heaven knows who's ancestors, and a chapel, and rusty armour, and a prison, and an *oubliette* with ghosts in it. Such a charming summer residence.'

'And this lady, she seems to be charming too. She has promised to come and call upon us.'

'The Gräfin Sophie? Ah, then you shall judge her yourself. She look pretty, and yet she is not. She seem a child, and yet she is none. She talk clever, but it is all on the top—all skim—you understand. She adore music and art, but she worship two gods to her unknown; for she never could sing in time or in tune, nor improve upon the blank pages of her album. Now she is married,' he added slyly, 'she want to have a *salon*, and take the artists under her leetle wing. Well, it please her, and it not hurt them.'

'I thought her most agreeable,' said Eva.

'You are right, meess. Quite the most agreeable lady of all my—*Ach mein Gott!* in utter dismay. 'I hear a carriage at the gate. If it should be hers, now? Then will I cut and run.'

'Perhaps she wishes us to come under her little wing,' said I, laughing.

'It is herself,' said Von Zbirow, peeping cautiously out of the window. 'Ladies, excuse if I fly.'

'Do stay,' said Eva, 'and help us to entertain her.'

He shook his head and declined.

'But have no fear, she will entertain herself. She is a Vesuvius of words. I do dread her tongue. She talk so high-pitched and so loud that it give me the fever, and I dance the tarantelle here,' tapping his finger on his forehead. 'My leetle friends, *au revoir*.'

And he made his escape, rushing past the heiress-bride as she walked up the garden, with a hasty salute, and well-improvised air of preoccupation and of the important business that waits for no one.

The next moment Frau Richter herself opened the studio-door, and introduced the gracious 'Frau Merrydick.'

She was tall, inclined to be plump, with a rose complexion that had the misfortune to look like rouge, and a profusion of light hair that had the misfortune to look like a wig. Still, as Von Zbirow had said, with none of the better parts of prettiness, the whole was somehow not unpleasing, thanks to a bright good-humoured expression of countenance, and a genial manner of talking.

From the formal courtesy of first greetings she quickly glided into easy friendliness. Her flow of words was indeed bewildering; and she obviously liked, of all things, to exercise her volubility in the English tongue.

'And so the dear old studio is yours now,' she began, looking

round, as if claiming a kind of vested interest in it. 'It used to belong to poor Perotti. I knew him; he gave me lessons in water-colour. Such a nice man! He is in Italy since a year, and they say he is in a consumption. Now this is what I call a charming place for you to have found. And do you live here all by yourselves, and not afraid? You are orphans, of course. No? Nor sisters. That is strange.'

Eva put in a few words about my illness, which she caught up at once as sufficient explanation.

'Ah, you *voyage* on account of your health. True, poor child; I noticed how pale you looked last night. I was ill once myself, most ill; but they sent me to take the baths at Ems. It is a charming place, Ems. The Kaiser comes there, and the band is, O, most beautiful. If I were you, I should go there in the summer.'

And she stopped for breath. But before either of us could respond she resumed with fresh vivacity, turning to Eva:

'So all these paintings are yours, mademoiselle. Ah, what a nice talent; and how happy must you feel to be able to paint like that! What would I not give for it!'

Not what Eva had given, I felt sure—the best part of fifteen years.

'And you, mademoiselle' (it was my turn now), 'you sang beautiful last night. You have a 'squisite voice; not a great one, but what you call sympathetic, and I like your style. And Herr von Zbirow—you know him; he is my most particular old friend, and his word is law in music, you must know—he says you sing better than any amateur in Deutschland. Ah, what a pretty picture is that of the sweet little birds and the nest! breaking off suddenly, as her eye fell upon

Eva's last. 'What do you do with it when it is finished? Sell it? O, then please let me buy. I want some pictures for my boudoir; something light and elegant, like birds, or grapes, or flowers. What have you more?'

And as she went round the studio the fever for buying grew upon her, until she was on the point of taking everything in the embarrassment of making a selection. The novelty of the business, the fun of purchasing pictures on her own account, were, she candidly confessed, quite irresistible. I wondered, silently, what the English husband would say. She volunteered the information, observing aloud to herself:

'The dear little heart, he is so fond of me, he refuse me nothing.'

When at last she was taking leave she said, with unaffected cordiality,

'Pray come to see me at my house as often as you like. Are you not dull here sometimes in this our large town? But I shall have a *soirée musicale* at home next month, and you will come, I trust. And you, mademoiselle, will sing

for us. Herr von Zbirow will be there, and I shall have some interesting people, all that there is of most interesting.'

And off she went, overflowing with pretty compliments and lively speeches to the very last moment. I accompanied her to the garden-gate. When I rejoined Eva, I found her examining the card our visitor had left on the table.

'Mrs. Leopold Meredith,' she read aloud.

'Meredith!' I repeated, thunderstruck.

'The name was more than poor Von Zbirow could manage. No such terrible mouthful, after all.'

'Leopold Meredith,' I muttered, again snatching the card, and staring at it to convince myself. 'It is he, and no mistake.'

'What, do you know him?'

'No,' I replied briefly. 'I've seen him, that's all; but that was long ago, in England; and it took me by surprise to hear he had married in Germany.'

Now was it pride, pique, preference, or empty pockets, that had moved Leopold Meredith to place his hand in Fräulein von Seckendorf's?

(To be continued.)

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

THE SEASIDE IN SPRING.

EASTER this year falls early, and most people have formed the habit of going out of town at Easter. We would recommend them to go straight off to the seaside. When the Volunteer Review was held on Easter Monday near Brighton, there was a regular migration thitherwards and to all the pretty watering-places on the Sussex coast. This year the crowds will overflow the quaint old town of Dunstable. The demand for Dunstable larks will, we fear, be prodigious, but we hope an impulse will be given to the pretty ingenious trade of straw bonnets. Perhaps, too, something will be done for the grand old priory church, the exterior of which is in a shamefully ruinous condition. The famous Downs will be found to be admirably adapted for the exploits of our great Volunteer army. A day on the Dunstable Downs will do everybody good, and be a capital preparation for a week at Brighton or somewhere else on the coast. Just now the remarkable case of the conviction of the lodging-house keeper, who tried so hard to convict two innocent ladies of felony, has drawn a little unfavourable attention to the burning subject of seaside lodgings. It was unfortunate for the wretched criminal, but especially fortunate for the interests of society, that these deeply-injured ladies were the owners of a great name known all over England, and especially well known in the county of Sussex. It ought not, however, to excite any prejudice against that numerous and

comfortable class, often very deserving, the Brighton landladies, albeit in some instances a salutary terror may not be misplaced.

One of the hardest-worked men in London lays down the hygienic rule that he requires three months' holiday in the autumn and three weeks at Easter. It is a very liberal allowance, but perhaps a chronic state of tension and pressure could hardly be maintained upon less. When a man has been at work since November, and has before him the height of the London season, he is wise to interpose a brief season of rest if he has the chance. He should make the rest and retirement as absolute as possible, more especially if he has books, briefs, sermons, and speeches to attend to. He can procure this absolute rest anywhere on the coast. Fashion has inexorably decreed that the coast should be frequented in the autumn and deserted in the spring. Yet we venture to assert that the seaside at spring is more delightful than at any other time of the year. If the winds are bleak, the rocks gather the sunshine, and screen you against the blast. In the sweet mild moods of wayward April, a day on calm water, when you breathe the iodine and the ozone, has a most exhilarating and tonic effect. In these gentle southern climates the wild-flowers blossom with gay profusion, and you welcome the stately blooms of the garden and the conservatory. The oceanic atmosphere is a true restorative after the fogs and fatigues of London, a true renovant against the coming crush of the season. Moreover,

there are special advantages attending the seaside in spring. You do not make one of a horde in the annual irruption. You find the natives a mild-eyed, mild-voiced race, unlike the creatures of prey who have to make the brief season yield profits that must last the whole year. You pay local prices, not fancy prices. You make friends with the hardy honest race whom we especially love, the simple fisher-folk. All through the winter we have had our fish for breakfast—sole, whiting, fresh herring fit for a king, golden mullet, and silvery mackerel. Think of the hundred brave men and more who have gone down in their fishing-smacks in the rough North Sea, and make what donation you can afford to that admirable fund at the Mansion House. The fishermen who have been obliged to lie up for the winter are now mending their nets, and bringing their black boats down to the beach. This is the season of the year when they will look upon you more as friends than fares. But wherever you take your walks abroad, far inland or along the coast-line, you will find a hearty welcome. You are the herald and harbinger of a happier day. The winter, with its scarcity and anxiety, is departing, and the bounteous summer is not far off. That sweet warm sunshine seems to lift the burden from life, and imparts to it breadth and freedom. Summer and autumn—winter as well—you may enjoy the coast, but there is only one spring-time of the year, as of life, and the seaside is then at its best and purest.

The economic aspect of the subject has been hinted at, and may rightly receive some more attention. Visits at the seaside might be more equalised, and be distributed over a larger space of time. The instinct of migration to the waterside is very strong on all of

us Britishers. If you examine, as so many of us have been doing lately, the map of Eastern Europe, you will see how the Greeks have everywhere loved the seaboard, while the slower Slavonic race invariably retreat inland towards the hills. We are like the Greeks; and in such matters of good taste Greek instincts are invariably right. No *paterfamilias* who has been in the habit of taking his belongings annually to the seaside would willingly forego that great advantage. That annual trip both prolongs and intensifies existence. But times are hard; trade is dull; foreign securities are depreciated. Fixed incomes, in many cases, have sadly diminished. P. F. is not quite sure that he will be able to afford the heavy outlay of the summer trip. But he might be very well able to afford to go to the seaside in the spring, instead of waiting for the fashionable season. You may get a house or lodgings for a guinea and a half which would cost you five or seven guineas a week in August or September. In various other ways the expenditure is materially diminished. It is not as if you lost anything by going in the spring instead of later on. You lose something in the way of society, but you gain more in the way of Nature. In other respects you are a gainer. He who has never dwelt by the seaside in spring, watched the magical lights, heard its manifold voices, has missed the greatest balm and beauty which it owns.

We cannot but think that the blessings and benefits of a seaside residence might be conferred much more widely than is now the case. One is sorry to think of the crowds of operatives, labourers, and small shopkeepers who, 'in populous cities pent,' pass years without seeing the sea, except through the fugitive joy of a cheap excursion

train. If they are to manage a longer excursion, it must be in the early days of spring. At this time of the year there are numbers of small householders who would be glad to let their lodgings for no more than a proportionate share of the rent, or get their place aired at the very minimum of profit. Could not many poor people bring their work down with them? or by a careful examination of the labour market, under the auspices of Mr. Alsager Hill, find seaside places where their labour would be acceptable, and perhaps seaside people be enabled to get to London town for a time? One great difficulty would be the railway fare; but the railway companies in such instances would be inclined to act liberally. Might not benevolent people, in town or at the seaside, do all they can to promote such a movement? John Stuart Mill longed for a time when English people would work for fewer days in the year, and for fewer hours of the day. We all try to look hopefully to a time of general improvement and prosperity in the condition and prospects of the country; and it would be a glorious thing if our working classes could count on a spring-time holiday on the coast.

In a flying visit to the coast, at this season of the year, it is curious to take count of the social phenomena. The little watering-place is beginning to wake up. For a long time it has been in a state of suspended animation. The tradesmen have been moderately and mildly subsisting upon each other. The chronic invalids have been hermetically sealed up, and the maiden ladies have been addicted to tea and turn out. The amusements have not been violent. A few roughs from town have blacked their faces, and imposed upon the credulity of the local public as

Christy Minstrels. Our chief local *savant* has given a lecture on the 'Polarisation of Light,' which aroused only a languid enthusiasm. The 'Penny Readings' have been a comparative failure. People have insisted on reading who did not know how to read; and it will require a generation of school boards to restore correct notions of accent and pronunciation. Moreover, some young men, under the harmless title of 'Selections from the Writings of Mr. Madison,' actually performed *Box and Cox* at a Penny Reading, to the great scandal of the more serious part of the community. The pier gives the true pulse of the community. When you first come down you have it all to yourself. But the weather brightens. A nursemaid, with a perambulator, breaks the 'horrid stillness.' The next fine day an old woman opens a stall at the end of the pier, and you buy a set of photographic views to encourage her. Finally, a German band—have they been hid away, as troglodites, during the winter?—gives us music. Unwittingly you have inaugurated the season. At first you paced the pier, as it were the deck of a ship, in utter loneliness; but society has revived with the spring.

It is in the early spring, just as the pleasure-seekers are thinking of going to the seaside, that the invalids prepare to leave. They will linger there just for a little while. Already they are meditating leaving off of wraps and respirators. The vital influences of the year warm and cherish them; they rely less upon the chemist and the physician. As the fine days multiply, they exchange congratulations. They say to themselves that, before they go away, they will see something of the country. They have stayed so long fronting the sea through the winter months that

it becomes a relief to get into the genuine country-side, where the lanes are white with may, where the rich vivid tender greens of spring have that brilliancy which so soon fade away, where the high tide of renewed life seems to vibrate through all Nature. Now is the time when we consult *Murray* and the local guide-books and the county histories, and get down from the town libraries what we think will help us in our researches. The invalids have stayed so many months for health, that now they will enjoy a few weeks of pleasure, before they take flight homewards. They plan excursions to abbey and castle and headland and famous battle-fields. How many visitors will Mr. Tennyson's *Harold* be sending to Battle, the site of that awful Senlac fight seven miles from Hastings? Invalids, especially invalids in a state of convalescence, are a very interesting class of people. But you ought to be content either with society or without it in the brief spring sojourn at the sea. Solitude has a natural tendency to renovate mental and moral stamina. Introduce yourself to yourself, and cultivate your own better acquaintance. Study the book on the subject which you have so long intended, but for which the necessary leisure has hitherto failed to come. The brain is a part of the human body, and requires exercise as much as the human leg. When you get back to town your friends will truly tell you how well you are looking, and you will give them reason to own that you have a nature that expands, and does not retrograde, with each renewing spring.

RECENT PROGRESS IN SANITARY SCIENCE.

A new kind of sanitary work has been recently introduced in Glasgow, of the probable value of which

a high estimate may fairly be formed. What is described as a 'self-acting apparatus' for collecting the floating atmospheric impurities has been set up in six different parts of the town; and by the elimination of the matters thus collected, and particularly the comparison of them with other analogous specimens taken in the outlying country and elsewhere, it is believed that valuable information will be gained as to the causes of the healthfulness or otherwise of various neighbourhoods, the origin of epidemics, and the like. It is now many years since it has become evident to all interested in sanitary measures that systematic observations on the nature of air-contaminations are at least as important as those of the pollutions of the water-supply; and a great amount of knowledge on some points connected with this question has already been collected by the labours of Dr. Angus Smith, whose researches on the chemical composition of the air in workshops, theatres, mines, sitting-rooms, and the like, together with those of many others in the same directions, formed the substance of a course of lectures delivered a year or two ago at the Royal Institution by Mr. W. N. Hartley.* But a systematic examination of air-contaminations, performed simultaneously in a number of places, would afford much more extensive grounds for generalisation and deduction. Thus it is only within the last few years that the value of the researches of Schwann, Schultze, Schroeder, and others, chief of whom is Pasteur, on the influence of atmospheric germs on fermentation, putrefaction, and analogous processes has been fully appreciated, and the doctrine of spontaneous

* Since published by Longmans & Co., under the title, *Air, and its Relations to Life*.

generation finally put *hors de combat* by the repetition and multiplication of the experiments of these *savants* by Professor Tyndall.

The evil effects on human life of such floating germs are well illustrated by the experimental inquiry into the causes of hay-fever recently made by Mr. Blackley of Manchester, by the ingenious device of flying a kite to which was attached a kind of box containing microscope slides moistened with glycerine; it was clearly proved that the pollen, spores, and seeds of grasses and other forms of vegetation abound in the air during the haymaking months, even when the air-current to which the kite ascends is at a great elevation and blows over a large stretch of sea: thus at Filey, on the Yorkshire coast, when the kite attained the elevation of a thousand feet, it was found to have a large deposit of pollen on the glasses exposed at this elevation—a stiffish easterly breeze blowing from the sea all the time, and for twelve hours previously—whilst no pollen-grains at all were deposited on similar glasses exposed at the sea-level. Careful precautions were of course taken in this and other analogous observations to prevent contamination of the slides before the kite ascended. This was effected by adapting a clockwork arrangement to the box containing the slides, of such a character that the slides were completely closed in until after a certain period (during which the kite was made to ascend), after which the clockwork opened a kind of door, so as to allow the breeze to blow against the glass slides, and deposit on the sticky glycerine surface the spores, &c., carried along by its agency. Analogous observations on the air of various localities during the prevalence of hay-fever, and actual experiments on the power of the pollen-grains of

various grasses, &c., to set up this distressing complaint when inhaled, and so brought into contact with the mucous membrane of the nostril, all furnished arguments and proofs pointing in one and the same direction, viz. that the *catarrhus æstivus*, or hay-fever, is a form of disease owing its origin entirely to the existence of certain kinds of germ-life in the atmosphere, certain individuals being more liable to be affected by these germs than others.

To persons whose individual idiosyncrasy is of such a nature that they are more particularly subject to this and other analogous diseases, especially those of a zymotic character, the question as to what chemical agents are the most powerful antiseptics is of great interest. Many of the so-called 'disinfectants' sold are really not capable of destroying infection at all, at least when the infective influence proceeds, as it is now usual to suppose is generally the case, from some form of germ-life: *deodorants* indeed they are, as they have the power of chemically destroying the evil-smelling gases and vapours which usually, though not invariably, accompany the development and spread of such germs; and hence a false feeling of security is liable to be produced when in the sick-room faint or unpleasant odours are destroyed by the plentiful use of such substances, and a comparatively agreeable atmosphere produced, possibly by the use of some perfume, the aromatic odour of which only hides that which it would be wiser to remove and destroy altogether. Within the last few days another 'disinfectant' has been introduced to the public under the alluring name of *sanitas*; this substance is in fact essentially an aqueous solution of the body known to chemists as 'peroxide of hydrogen,' the action of which

is closely akin to that of Condy's fluid. But it is claimed for the new substance that it is also possessed of the power of retarding the development of germ-life and preventing putrefactive and fermentative changes from occurring; and experimental evidence is brought forward in support of the assertion. The question as to the actual efficiency of the new material therefore may be commended to the attention of the medical faculty, and in particular of that section of it which more especially devotes itself to hygiene and sanitary matters; and to such, the lecture on the subject recently delivered to the Society of Arts by Mr. Kingzett, in which the history and advantages of 'sanitas' were largely dwelt on, will be of considerable interest.

Dr. Richardson's vision of the 'City of Health,' in which every improvement that the most advanced sanitarian could suggest is adopted—with the result of producing various startling alterations in the general character of the surroundings—appears to be in a fair way to be realised, at any rate to some extent; for a company is forming to erect houses constructed in accordance with Dr. Richardson's views, on an estate in the vicinity of Worthing. It is to be hoped that the projectors of this scheme will not meet with the fate, not unfrequent amongst advocates of views and doctrines considerably in advance of the practices of the age, viz. exciting more or less interest for a while and giving rise to some little opposition thereby, but speedily falling into neglect, and finally dropping out of sight altogether, until their ideas again crop up in a more or less modified form, to run the same course over again. If they finally become adopted, when the popular notions have been sufficiently educated and advanced, the

resuscitator of the old invention probably reaps the lion's share of the credit and advantage, whilst the originator is happy if his name is barely remembered as having had some time before sundry wild utopian views on the subject. As an experiment in sanitary science it would be much to be regretted should the Worthing project fail after once commencing; but it certainly seems not unlikely that popular prejudices will prove so stubborn and hard to combat that the prospects of the scheme may not look so encouraging during the first few years of trial as the shareholders might desire. Perchance some millionaire, desirous of being permanently associated with what may turn out to be a most valuable hygienic improvement, will, in case of necessity, step forward as the material agent in the reduction of Dr. Richardson's idea to practice, and thereby earn the gratitude of valetudinarians.

RAILWAY IMPROVEMENTS.

The number of railway accidents occurring annually in this country alone which might have been wholly avoided, or greatly mitigated in severity, by the employment of efficient brake-power is something considerable. The railway companies have not been slow in considering how best to overcome the deficiencies of the ordinary brakes in use; but their deliberations have been materially delayed by the circumstance that several inventors have proposed novel forms of brake; and until it is clearly decided which of these is really the best for practical wear and tear, it has apparently seemed good to adopt none of them; a policy not altogether unlike that of the proverbial Irishman, who would never adventure himself in the water until he knew how to swim. At length, however, there

seems some chance that the claims of the passenger for as much protection against chance of accident as is humanly possible will receive due attention. An elaborate series of experiments on two of the most approved of these brakes (the 'Westinghouse' and 'Smith's vacuum') has recently been made on the North British Railway, and in consequence the directors of that line have decided to adopt the former brake on all their passenger trains. Curiously, the South-Eastern Railway has arranged to adopt the latter brake; from which it may be inferred, let us hope, that the merits of the two are nearly equal. It would almost seem as if the directors of railway lines were beginning to perceive the obvious fact that the best way, in the long-run, to advance their own interests is to endeavour to accommodate the travelling public in matters of convenience, and more particularly in protection against accidents.

A new use for paper has recently been suggested which would, at first sight, be as incongruous with the ordinary properties of this substance as the production of 'sun-beams out of bottled cucumbers;' this is neither more nor less than the manufacture of railway wheels. These so-called paper wheels are made by filling up the interstices between an iron skeleton framework, uniting the tire and axle with pasteboards of straw paper well cemented together by paste and compressed into a solid block by hydraulic power; such wheels will, it is stated, stand the most severe usage, and are especially suitable for brake-wheels. One of the first made was exhibited at the Philadelphia Exhibition, after running over 300,000 miles under a Pullman car.

Every traveller by the Metropolitan Railway who has desired

to read his newspaper whilst journeying, and has been unable to do so from the flickering and scarcely luminous flames of the gas-lamps (especially noticeable in the early morning), will hail with pleasure the statement recently published that it is practicable to supply railway carriages with compressed gas, from shale and other refuse, at a lower price than ordinary London gas, whilst in power and continuance the light given by such shale gas is far superior to that of the usual kind. The experiment of using such gas has been tried on the St. John's Wood branch of the Metropolitan Railway for nearly a year, and its success is such that it is stated that the system is to be extended to every part of that line. Independently of these salient advantages, there is a saving of time with the compressed gas, as the cylinders in which the gas is stored under the carriages only require replenishing once in the day, since of course the compressed gas occupies much less space than ordinary gas in an un-compressed state. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that in time the use of gas will become general on railways, and that the inconvenient and but faintly luminous oil-lamps now so largely employed will shortly become things of the past.

A proposition is now being debated for constructing underground railways in Paris. Two main lines are proposed, running east and west, the first starting from the Vincennes Station, to pass under the Château d'Eau, the Halles, the Palais-Royal, and the Bourse, and terminating at Les Batignolles; the second starting from the Orleans Terminus, to run along the left bank of the Seine, and under the whole length of the Boulevard St. Germain. A junction line between the two and side branches are also contemplated.

TRANSPARENCY OF METALS.

To see through a millstone or a brick wall has usually been regarded as a feat requiring for its accomplishment powers possessed by human beings only when in a spiritualistic trance, or when otherwise rendered clairvoyant; and to see through a mass of metal is ordinarily regarded as equally impossible to human visual organs. It is true that it has long been known that gold-leaf may be beaten so fine as to transmit a greenish light tolerably readily; and, indeed, this is utilised as a practical test of the quality of gold by the gold-beater, the admixture of small quantities of silver with the gold employed causing a distinguishable alteration in the tint of the transmitted light. Hitherto, however, this property of translucency when in thin films has been regarded as peculiar to gold, and belonging to no other metal; the reason for this being no doubt, to some extent, that few metals other than gold can be successfully reduced by hammering to the requisite degree of tenuity; save silver and platinum, indeed, no metals approach to gold. By electrical means, however, thin films of gold and other metals can be obtained which readily transmit light, the mode of operating to produce these attenuated sheets of metal being simply to cause electric sparks to pass from wires of the required metals passing into tubes of rarefied air or other gases, when the particles of metal detached from the wires by the sparks become deposited on the sides of the glass, forming an excessively thin film quite continuous under the microscope. Gold films thus prepared transmit a fine green light; silver gives a fine blue colour; copper a dull green; platinum a bluish gray; zinc and

cadmium a deep bluish gray; iron a nearly neutral tint, but slightly brownish.

THE NEW LARGE GUNS.

The results recently obtained with the 'Woolwich Infant,' or 81-ton gun, and the Italian 100-ton gun appear to demonstrate conclusively the enormous efficiency of these monster weapons, the latter having apparently somewhat the best of it, if the experimental trials may be regarded as a sort of competitive examination of the two; for the 'infant' is becoming seriously affected by the extension of the fissure or crack noticed some time ago, and will probably be only used for a few more rounds, after which it will be removed to the Royal Arsenal, and cut in half in front of the trunnions, for the purpose of attaching a new steel lining, the whole cost of this rebuilding, so to speak, of the gun probably amounting to several thousand pounds; whilst its larger rival, up to the present time, has stood the tests applied to it remarkably well. Some idea of the magnitude of the forces involved in these weapons may be gathered from the circumstance that the pressure exerted on every square inch of the powder chamber is usually upwards of 25 tons, occasionally reaching the enormous amount of 42 tons. Let it be supposed that in a crowd an average man weighs two cwt. and occupies half a square foot; thus to equal a weight of 25 tons per square inch there would have to be 18,000 *layers* of men, each layer resting on the heads and shoulders of those underneath: allowing five feet to each layer, this mass of humanity would be in vertical height about seventeen miles, or upwards of twenty times the height of Ben Nevis!

DRAWING-ROOM AMUSEMENTS.

BLIND-MAN'S BUFF.

THIS game scarcely needs description, but it is so old and so well known that it claims at least a place in this collection. Let me, then, in case there should arise any reader whose education has in this respect been neglected, say that, though somewhat rough and noisy, this is the most popular and classical of all the games extant in these islands. Like many others, it depends upon recognition. One of the players, who should be designated by lot, has his eyes bandaged, and pray let it be carefully done, so that he may not be able to see down the sides of his nose. He is then led into the middle of the room, when one of the players thus apostrophises him: 'How many cows has your father got?' 'Three,' he answers. 'What colour are they?' 'Black, white, and gray.' 'Then turn round three times and catch whom you may.' The blind man at once rushes after the other players, and many are the hairbreadth escapes and close shaves which are then witnessed. The blind man generally comes in for a deal of falling about over chairs, knocking his head against the wall, and other disagreeables, which are often increased by the exhibition of a most reprehensible desire on the part of the other players to tease him in various ways by pulling his coat-tails or his hair, or shouting in his ear, practices which, of course, need only to be pointed out to be avoided. At length he succeeds in catching one of the delinquents, and is required to give the name

of the person caught. If he succeeds in doing so that person takes his place; but if not, he continues in his undesirable employment of running after invisible beings. Of course the person caught remains perfectly still, and the blind man must rely upon his knowledge of the dresses, or upon his power of recognising features by passing his hand over them, for discovering the name of his captive. Wilkie's well-known picture gives a better idea of the game than volumes of description; and where there is a sufficient degree of familiarity among the players, and a sufficient absence of sharp-cornered furniture, it will be found a most efficient means of passing away an idle hour.

BLIND-MAN'S WAND.

This is a quieter form of the game. The blind man is placed in the centre of the room with a short wand in his hand, and the rest of the players form a circle and gallop round him to a lively measure. When they have gone round two or three times the music ceases, and the blind man then extends his wand in any direction he pleases. The person towards whom it points must take it, and the blind man then makes three noises, such as the crowing of a cock, the squeaking of a pig, and the braying of a donkey; or he may pronounce three vowels or three words, which the person designated must imitate; or else, as is sometimes allowed, may ask three questions, which must be answered. If from the lights obtained in either of these manners

the blind man is able to guess the name of the person holding the other end of the wand, they change places; but if he fails, the game proceeds in the same way until he is more fortunate. Of course, those to whom the wand is presented must disguise their voices as much as possible in making the requisite answers or imitations.

SHADOW BUFF.

The victim in this game is seated on one side of a sheet held or fastened perpendicularly. On the other side, at some distance, is placed a single lamp, and each of the players passes in succession before it, so as to throw the shadow of the profile on to the sheet, from which alone the name of the person is to be guessed. A great opportunity is thus given for deception of the most varied kind—hats, wigs, and disguises of every description are allowable, and the players can in this manner render themselves quite undistinguishable the one from the other. The different effect which may be produced by a mere change in the arrangement of the hair, or the adoption of the slightest form of head-dress, is something quite startling; and the victim must be clever indeed if he does not beg to be replaced in a very short time. As the quality of mercy is to be encouraged, such a petition should not be always rejected, the more so as a change of victims adds to the interest of the game, by producing a necessity for fresh disguises.

TURN THE TRENCHER.

The players sit or stand in a circle, each one being designated either by a number or by the name of a flower or an animal. One of the party then takes a metal or wooden plate, and spins it round on its lower edge on the ground,

with as much force and dexterity as may be, at the same time calling out the number or name pertaining to one of those sitting or standing round. The person so designated must run and seize the trencher before it falls lifeless on the ground, on pain of paying a forfeit, and must then turn it in the same manner. This is a very lively game, and gives rise to much fun; because as turning a trencher does not usually form part of even the most liberal education, the attempts made to do it effectively are generally very lamentable, and the turn is often so feeble as to render it physically impossible to catch it before it falls. Of course it is very mean to look round the circle in order to discover any person engaged in improving conversation, and then to call out the name or number belonging to that person; but such is human nature that this is often done, and generally with much success, and a great increase of forfeits.

KISS IN THE RING.

A rather hazardous game, looked upon with an evil eye by mammas and chaperones, and mostly favoured by Foresters and Odd Fellows. A ring is formed of gentlemen and ladies holding each other's hands with arms extended. A lady is then placed in the middle with a handkerchief, which she throws at any gentleman she is pleased to select. He catches it, and runs after the lady, who darts in and out beneath the extended arms of the ring with as much speed as she can command or as she may wish to display. The pursuer must follow every winding she takes, and when he catches her is rewarded with a kiss in the middle of the ring. The lady is then sent into the circle, and the gentleman in turn throws the handkerchief to another lady, and flies from the

embrace of the fair one selected in like manner. The game is an epitome of the whole art of flirtation, and as such is of doubtful morality, but it is a capital one for children, and not undesirable for those grown-up persons who do not object to osculation.

PIGEON FLIES.

This is one of the large class of catch-games, best played at dessert when the children have been brought in. The person who initiates it places his forefinger on the table, and calls out, 'Pigeon flies,' at the same time raising his finger in the air. He goes on with several other birds, as 'Sparrow flies,' 'Bullfinch flies,' 'Crow flies,' raising his finger each time, in which he is to be imitated by the rest. But here comes the cruelty of the thing; for when the whole company is in full swing of imitating him he calls out, 'Crocodile flies,' or 'Elephant flies,' and does *not* raise his finger in illustration of an assertion so manifestly contrary to the laws of Nature. The other players, however, being unprepared, probably do as they have done before, and the consequence is that each one has to pay a forfeit. The game must be carried on with some rapidity, so as not to allow time for reflection.

OPEN SCISSORS.

Another game of like character. The leader addresses his neighbour with, 'I sell you my open scissors.' The person addressed repeats it with the greatest care to be correct, but is nevertheless astonished at being asked for a forfeit. The catch is that when the formula is repeated it should be at the same time illustrated by crossing the fingers, the hands, or the legs, or any extraneous objects which happen to be handy, such as knives or forks. It is the omission to

do this which incurs the liability to pay forfeit; and as the trick is usually not discovered for some time, a very fair collection may generally be made.

FORFEITS.

In all games where forfeits have been paid they are to be redeemed by the submission to certain penalties. The infliction of them is delegated to a player who kneels down with his face concealed in the lap of a lady, who takes each forfeit, and holding it up asks, 'What shall be done by the owner of this pretty thing?' The forfeit-crier then names the penalty to be inflicted; and as there is always a difficulty in assigning punishments of an amusing character, the task of prescribing them should be given to a player distinguished by experience or invention. For the benefit of those who possess neither, or who wish for a ready means of vindicating the majesty of the law, here are a few tasks which may be imposed:

Pose for a statue.—The culprit is placed on a chair, and each of the company puts him or her into some position, explaining at the same time the idea intended to be conveyed or the statue it is intended to represent.

Kiss your shadow.—The intelligent criminal will in this case place himself between the light and a lady, upon whom his shadow will then fall. *Verbum sap.*

Make your will, which consists in leaving to each of the company such of your good or bad qualities as they are deficient in. This will probably bring out many latent differences of opinion.

Kiss the candlestick.—If he can, the culprit will induce a lady to hold a candle for him, and then will take a mean advantage of her good-nature.

Tell the only lady you love in

the room that she is ugly and disagreeable, and ask her if she returns your affection.

Preach a pleasing sermon without any text.—The culprit begins various discourses on various subjects, each one of which is objected to by somebody, and is therefore held not to be pleasing. When all have objected he finally preaches his sermon on—nothing.

State why you have not paid your washerwoman.

Make a speech on the differential calculus, with musical illustrations.

State whether you would prefer to be yourself eaten by an alligator, or an alligator eaten by yourself, and give your reasons.

Run through the table.—Here the culprit may try it first with the multiplication table.

To sing in a cats' concert.—This works off several forfeits at once. The culprits are made to sing each a verse of a different song at the same time. There should be a leader to start them. The effect is delightful.

To dance a blind quadrille.—Four culprits are blindfolded and set to dance a quadrille to music, which results in confusion, if not in confusion.

To cap a verse.—The forfeiter recites a verse of poetry, and the culprit must immediately follow with another verse beginning with the last word of the model. If he cannot recollect one, then he must improvise one, on pain of another forfeit.

To bite an inch off the poker.—This consists simply in biting the air an inch from the end of the poker.

To illustrate one of your best qualities in each corner of the room.—If the culprit has sufficient belief in himself, he may illustrate mercy, generosity, truth, and constancy, by the aid of a little pantomime.

To give your man a character.—The culprit is to go to the lady who is crying forfeits, and to say, 'I wish to recommend my servant.' 'What character do you give him?' 'A perfect character.' The lady then asks how he can do various things, and is answered with the name of the person best known for excellence in that respect. 'How can he talk?' 'Like Sydney Smith.' 'How can he write poetry?' 'Like Tennyson.' 'How can he read?' 'Like Charles Dickens.' 'How can he make a speech?' 'Like Gladstone;' and so on. If the lady does not agree as to the excellence of any of the models mentioned she must say so, and state her reasons, when another model must be presented.

To be a deaf beggar.—Each of the company makes three remarks to the culprit; to the first two of which he replies, 'I can't hear,' while to the third he answers, 'I hear.' The joke consists in making the two first remarks very pleasant, and the third very disagreeable.

Should any of the culprits possess a peculiar aptitude for doing anything amusing, whether it be singing a comic song, imitating a well-known actor, or writing verses, he should be set to give a specimen of his power. It will be seen that in this way the tasks which are capable of being imposed may be multiplied indefinitely.

MAKING HISTORY.

A most useful game, as tending to exhibit to those who play it the little relation which the facts of any case may bear to the version of it current in society, and thereby teaching them how little reliance is to be placed upon gossip—a result which, if achieved, will amply repay any difficulties which may be encountered in order to arrive at it. Let one person of the party write

down a short tale, concerning anything or anybody, of any age or country whatever, and then retiring into a separate room read it to another of the party, who is then to be left alone. A third is then sent in, to whom the person who has just heard it repeats the tale from memory, and then leaves the room in turn; and thus each passes it on to the other until it has been told to the last person, who must then relate it aloud to the company. The original tale is then read, and will certainly be found to differ from that which is related by the last person in every essential particular, a result which cannot fail to shake the faith of those who believe in the value of oral tradition. In telling the tale it is advisable to introduce the names of persons and places, in order to see to what extent they are capable of being metamorphosed in passing from one person to another. This game is some-

times called 'Russian Scandal,' though why it should be distinguished as Russian it is difficult to say, since its features are those which scandal presents the world through.

In conclusion I commend these amusements to the attention of all those who find that time takes too much killing, or who have not leisure to devise a method of their own for the complete extinction of the common enemy. Most of them, perhaps, do not come within the category of what is purely intellectual; many of them will probably be considered somewhat trivial: but at any rate there is not one of them which, if properly approached and fairly carried out, is not capable of leaving at least this remembrance, by which, after all, the worth of such things is best tested—'Nous avons bien ri.'

THE ARTIST DISCOVERED.

CREATIVE power was strong within the boy,
 For in his soul was lit the spark divine
 Of artist-genius, hitherto unveil'd,
 As gems deep-hidden lie within the mine.

And so by stealth his easel would he take
 Into the studio, where his father wrought,
 And snatch a brief joy from his work of love,
 Unseen, unwatch'd, unguided, and untaught.

Until one day—it seal'd his destiny!—
 By chance discover'd at his stolen toil,
 His hidden talent was by fostering friends
 Nursed, and the nurture fruitful made the soil.

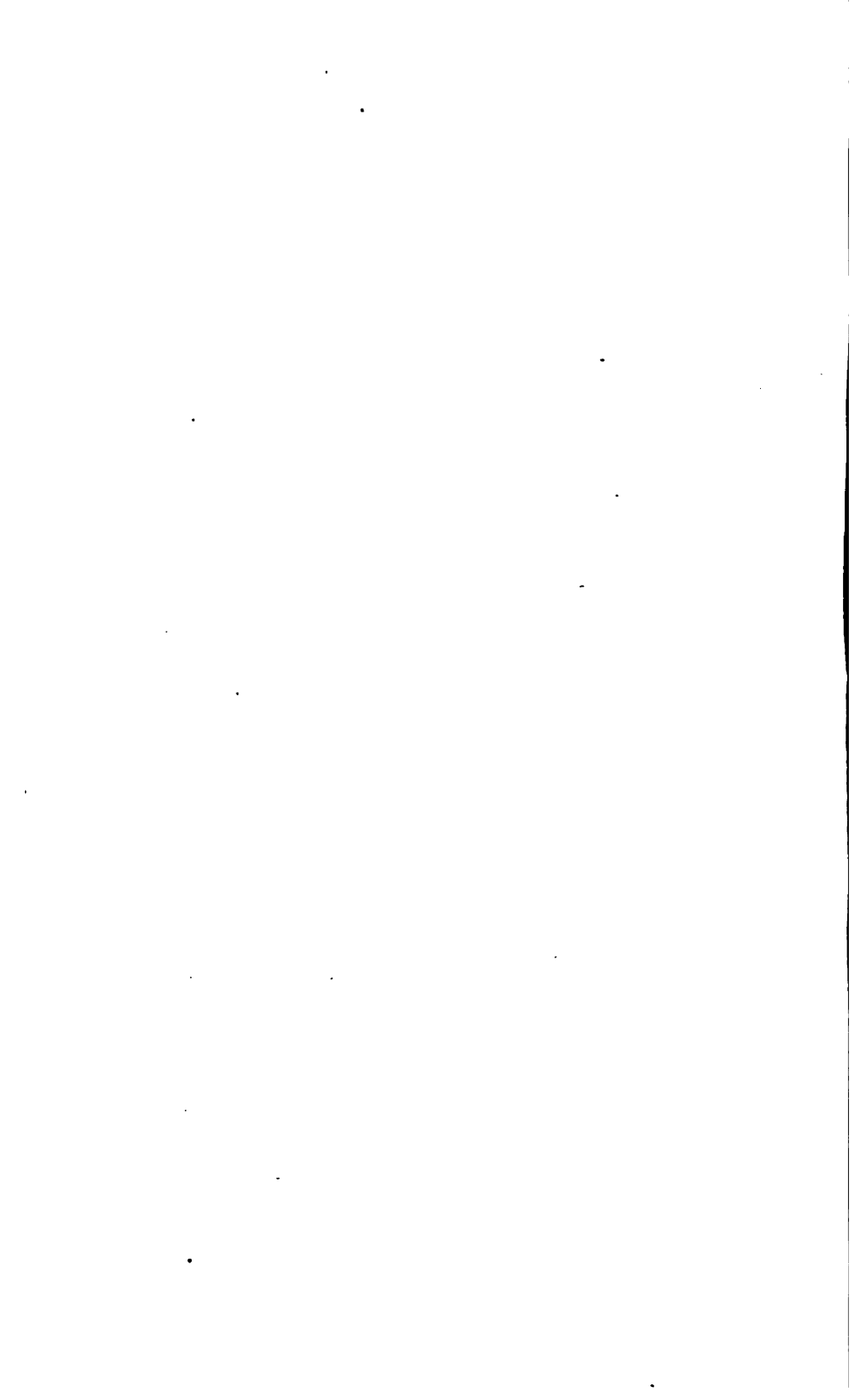
And now amidst our glorious artist-band
 Stands *his*, midst others a most honour'd name;
 A 'household word' throughout our English land,
 Inscribed for ever on the roll of Fame.

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.



W. L. G. 1860

THE ARTIST DISCOVERED.



GIRL LABOUR IN LONDON.

AMONGST an extensive class of the community it would be regarded as grossly libellous were the typical 'working man,' the mechanic, the pride and glory of his country, the blood, bone, and sinew of Great Britain, to be stigmatised as being a selfish individual. If, however, it were attempted to be shown not only that this was so, but that the particular in which his exclusive care for 'number one' most unmistakably cropped out was in his utter indifference as to who, in the common battle for bread, was doomed to excessive hard labour so long as he himself escaped with a moderate imposition,—I say that if such a charge were brought against the British workman, ten thousand indignant voices would be raised in denial of the monstrous accusation.

Selfish, indeed! Has it not been shown over and over again that the human bees of our hives of industry are the most self-sacrificing creatures under the sun? Is not every one aware—including the tyrants and would-be oppressors of the rights of labour—that our horny-handed sons of toil are leagued together and bound in the bonds of sworn brotherhood to resist the insidious encroachments not less than the open declarations of war of capital against labour? Have not working men scores and hundreds of times elected to throw themselves out of employment, to endure all the inconveniences of 'short commons' on strike-pay, rather than a mate should be im-

posed on to the extent even of a sixpence?

Selfish! What of the gallant and untiring struggle, the heroic holding out, the dogged persistence which has resulted in that greatest of modern peaceful victories, the establishment of the nine-hours movement among the trades? Let that one glorious fact alone stand out as a sufficient refutation of the false charge of selfishness.

This on the one hand. On the other, I take my stand in the dreary twilight of a winter's early morning on Blackfriars or London bridge, and I see trooping past me—not in twos and threes, but in such numbers that the wide pavement is thickly occupied—girls and boys ranging, as regards age, from thirteen to seventeen. Of the boys I will say nothing, beyond that there can be no doubt that society will one day wake up to the fact that the London errand-boy—the faithful, ill-fed, patient little drudge, on whose industry and integrity depends so much the smooth working of the commercial machinery of the great city—has not received his due share of consideration from his masters, in whose hands he is helpless.

The London School Board deserves the praise and the support of all right-minded Englishmen, were it only for the incalculable benefit it has conferred on the male juveniles of the working population. They at least have respite now until they are turned thirteen years old. It was not always so. Every allowance, even more per-

haps than is strictly 'reasonable,' may be made for those poor parents who so bitterly complain that the Compulsory Education Act has taken on itself to enlarge the minds of the children 'at the expense of their bellies;' in other words, that it insists on those who were employed at remunerative work ceasing therefrom, to become 'idle scholars.' There can be no doubt that in instances of widows left with a heavy family they found it of vast assistance to send out willing little Jack aged nine, Bill two years his senior, and Tom who is twelve and a half, to earn what they could at any light labour; and it is easy enough to understand that such poor women discovered it to be hard that such a source of income should not only be cut off, but that the injury should be aggravated by each little bread-winner requiring something of her to pay school-fees instead of contributing to the family cupboard. But then again there can be no question that the old facilities for child-working was much abused by that large class of the lower orders that does not care a straw where the household expenses come from or how, provided they have 'pocket money' for beer and tobacco, with ample leisure for the enjoyment of those luxuries. The probability is that the vigorous action of the School Board has set many an idle father unwillingly to work when he would much have preferred to have lived upon the earnings of his young children.

To return, however, to Blackfriars-bridge at seven o'clock in the morning, and the troop of little females (never mind the males) who are in such hot haste as may be, considering the bitter coldness of the weather, hurrying Cityward. They are not ragged girls by any means—a little taw-

dry maybe as regards their be-flounced skirts and gay hats—and though the majority of them wear gloves and bows, they are not so substantially shod as the freezing slush of the pavement renders desirable. Yet, as I have already stated, they are decent-looking little girls, nine out of every ten of them. Unmistakably the children of the working man of the type who just now felt his feelings so seriously outraged because he was accused of selfishness. But will he kindly tell me how he reconciles his claim to generous sentiment, and a noble spirit of self-sacrifice to the interests of his fellow-creatures whose privileges are jeopardised, with the fact that he permits his little daughters, who are incomparably less able to endure privation and fatigue than he himself is, to work a far greater number of hours each day than, supposing him, the parent, to be a blacksmith, he would think good for his bellows-blower? How does it run on all-fours with his firm conviction that it is an affront on the dignity of labour to ask a man to work more than nine hours between daylight and dark, that he gives countenance to his own children—tender girls of sixteen or so—turning out from home of a February morning almost before the gas-lamps are extinguished, to walk perhaps two or three miles to the factory or house of business where they are employed, to toil the whole day through, with scarcely fair time, and seldom or never fair opportunity, for decent meal-getting, until eight o'clock at night, with a long walk home again in the dark, and perhaps in rain or snow as well? Twelve hours a day, from eight until eight, are the ordinary hours of girl labour in London as regards 'out-door hands,' and that of course means twelve hours

'net,' and does not include the other hour or so spent in going and returning. Surely thirteen hours a day, or even twelve, is a heavier task than should be imposed upon a young girl, whatever may be the kind of labour required of her, or however necessary it may be that she should go out to work in order to supplement papa's hard earnings. Besides, one cannot but think that if papa—papa of the class in question—could bring himself to look at home with the same jealous eye for the rights of labour as he uses when at the workshop or the club, the evil might be easily remedied. Factory proprietors and City manufacturers, though they may not invariably be amenable to reason, are bound to give way like other folk when sufficient pressure is brought to bear against them; and by a combination of parents this might be accomplished in less than a month and at a thousandth of the cost involved in securing to the 'blood, bone, and sinew' of the country a half-holiday on Saturday, after the enormous labour of working nine hours a day since the previous Monday morning.

But as regards the kind of work the thousands of young girls who cross the bridges every morning are called on to perform. It might be supposed that after all, and although the long hours are of course objectionable, the employment could, as a rule, be of a sort that would not overtax their strength or endurance. Unfortunately, however, stern reality will not admit this. The majority of the girls and young women are engaged at needle-work; not quiet stitching with the work in the lap, and half a yard of cotton threaded in an ordinary needle in their hands. The needle they manipulate is

driven by machinery, which to set it going requires pretty much the same amount of muscular exertion, and pretty much the same action of the members, as is required in propelling a bicycle. And I can well imagine the lady-reader shaking her head at what she considers an extravagant simile. Of course, the fair peruser of these pages has had no experience in bicycle-riding; but she has cousins and brothers who have, and she knows that it is somewhat violent pastime. She has remarked occasionally, when the rider was not a particularly robust person, that the bumping of the great wheel beneath the saddle imparted to its occupant a nervous tremor, suggestive of jelly under disturbing influences; and that even the most stalwart of riders are not exempt from panting and blowing after a few miles' spin on a rough road. Whereas to set her pretty little sewing-machine in motion is as easy almost as idleness itself. But with all proper deference for any opinion a lady may choose to offer on the subject, I must be permitted to point out that there are sewing-machines and sewing-machines; and that the implement I am speaking of bears about as close a resemblance to the drawing-room article as a Park phaeton to a brewer's dray. I have not the slightest intention of disparaging the 'Zephyr,' or the 'Gossamer,' or the 'Aerial.' They are masterpieces of workmanship, one and all, and exactly adapted to the purpose; but they are, compared with their distant relative,—the heavy hard-working stitchers of boots and shoes, and canvas and duck and twill,—mere toys. What on earth would be the use of such playthings in the work-rooms of Messrs. Lazarus, Abrahams, & Co.,

who turn out army shirts at the rate of a thousand a day; and who make nothing of taking an order for completely clothing a regiment of militia on the Thursday, on the understanding that the men are to appear in their new suits at church parade on Sunday morning! Amongst the generality of people 'sewing,' however it may be performed, is associated with easily vulnerable material—soft cloth, calico, and that kind of thing. But the sewing-machine of modern times is by no means restricted to drapery or tailoring establishments. You cannot show a job of stitching so tough that the sewing-machine will not undertake and accomplish it. It can sew ship-sails, coal-sacks, traces for artillery horses even. Young girls, it is true, are not put at trace-sewing; it requires the assistance of a small steam-engine to accomplish that kind of work. But there are thousands who ply the machine needle on leather of a lighter kind; on that which is used in the manufacture of ladies' and gentlemen's boots and shoes. There is one London daily newspaper especially resorted to by those who require to advertise in relation to this branch of industry—the *Daily Chronicle*; and in its columns may any day be found dozens of advertisements for female shoe-makers, and for leather-bag makers, and cap-peak sewers, and leather pouch and purse makers, and for stitchers of driving-gloves and all manner of fur goods. But all the reading will fail to give one an adequate idea of the tremendously heavy work sewing these kind of things by machine is. One must visit a work-room when business is at full swing to realise it. Within a hundred yards of St. Paul's or the General Post Office

there are dozens of these manufactories: rooms containing twenty, thirty, fifty machines, each with its separate heavy clatter, which is like that of the sausage-machine the reader may chance to have heard in passing a pork-butcher's shop. Each, too, with its girl or woman worker. Each with its heavy iron double treadle, that requires the application of both feet to keep it going; both feet for the treadle, both hands for the management and guidance of the work, both eyes to the same end. Talk of the garret shirt-stitcher, of whom Hood drew so pathetic a poem-picture! She at least was enabled to perform her work in peace and quiet. She might not have got much to eat, but that little she was enabled to cook and eat in proper privacy and comfort; in which respect she was much better off than her machine-driving sister, who takes her few slices of bread in her pocket, and, when she can afford it, sends to the cook-shop for an ounce or two from a cheap joint, with a pennyworth of vilely-cooked vegetables; partaking of the meal with her plate on her lap, or perhaps on the machine, if it happens to be disengaged, in the same tainted atmosphere she and her fifty companions have all the morning been breathing.

But why, it may be asked, can she not do better than this? Simply, dear reader, because in the great majority of cases what she does is the best she can. Indeed it is not in every establishment of the kind indicated that the 'hands' are permitted to take dinner in the work-room. They have a certain time allowed for that meal, and they must 'clear out' until the return-bell rings. There is no dining-room on the premises for their accommodation;

space is far too precious within sound of Bow bells. They must 'clear out.' And go where? Usually to walk about the streets and look into the shop-windows, if the weather be fine; to huddle anywhere under cover, should it rain or snow. But why, it may be asked by the innocent, do they not resort to some humble decent dining-room, where they may obtain a cheap and wholesome meal, with reading or some other amusement for the dinner-hour? For the best of all possible reasons. Not long since there appeared before the magistrates a destitute youth who had tramped up from Shropshire, impelled by the delusion that if he could reach London, and find out where the Bank of England was, where all the money was kept, he should be able to pick up as much as would suffice for his humble wants from 'what they swept out at the front-door.' The young woman who sought in the heart of London for a quiet dining-room, where the ruling tariff was suitable to her means, would have a prospect of success about equal to that of the Shropshire youth in his undertaking. No such convenience exists; and what is more, if it did, the young woman, if she were an ordinary machine-hand, could not avail herself of it. She could not afford to do so. It is a great mistake to suppose that the sewing-machine was the guillotine that put an end to the wicked existence of Slopwork. That devouring dragon, which is answerable for more female lives than the fire-spitting beast of Wantley, was only checked for a while. There were those so mad as to imagine that now that such a prodigious amount of work could be performed in so short a time, the rapacious monster would be converted to the 'live

and let live' principle. Not he. He only made himself agreeable until such time as he could get the flying stitcher well in hand—until he could break it in, and get the bit in its mouth. He has done it. It is not a month ago when the old villany, with a new face, appeared in the police reports. A poor soul was charged with pawning shirts intrusted to her to make by an East-end merchant clothier. The woman pleaded that her children were so hungry that she was tempted to pawn some of the work in hope of being able to redeem it by the time the whole was completed. The work was machine-sewing. She hired the machine at half-a-crown a week, and what the prosecutor paid for his shirt-making was *a shilling a dozen*. 'Nonsense!' the incredulous magistrate interrupted her; 'that's only a penny each.' 'And that is all it is, sir,' said the woman; 'and you have to work a long, long day to make twelve.' 'And is it really a fact,' his worship remarked, turning to the merchant clothier, 'that this kind of work has fallen to such a deplorable condition that you can get it done at so poor a rate?' 'Your worship,' replied Mr. Shylock, 'if I wanted a hundred hands at the price, I could get 'em by holding up my finger.'

I do not pretend to say that ordinary 'warehouse work' is no better paid for, but what I do say is that, take it altogether, the girl or woman of ordinary capacity who works at a 'sweating shop,' as certain—it is to be feared a very large number—of the places in question are called, is very little better off than Hood's unfortunate seamstresses. The latter earned say ninepence a day; the former would get on an average seven shillings a week.

If a man were desirous of earning for himself a reputation for narrow-mindedness, he could perhaps not do better than industriously circulate as his opinion that 'machinery' was not invariably a term synonymous with improvement. Without inquiry he would be voted a 'fogy' of the ancient school, and on a par with those wisacres who saw in the introduction of the railway system the beginning of the downfall of England's greatness, and who were inclined to regard Watt with his 'steam' as a kind of first cousin to a personage, whose name need not be mentioned, with his fire and brimstone. In fair view, however, of falling even so dismally low in the esteem of my fellow-creatures, I make bold to question whether after all that most popular of modern inventions, the sewing-machine, has not proved itself a bane rather than a blessing. Commercially it has no doubt been a great success. It has given, and still gives, employment to a large number of smiths and other mechanics; as a marketable article it has put money in the purses of merchants, middle-men, and retailers. It has increased the demand for textile fabrics, not so much on account of the rapidity with which it converts material into the manufactured article, as that the articles it manufactures do not last the consumer as long as those produced under the handwork system, the result being the necessity for more frequently renewing on the part of the purchaser. From this point of view the sewing-machine has certainly proved itself to be no friend to the community at large. The tailor, the shirtmaker, and other tradesmen, the fundamental principle of whose business is the setting of stitches, may have been enabled

to largely decrease their labour expenses, but it would be difficult to show that the wearer of apparel has participated to any appreciable extent. Clothes and all manner of sewn things are no cheaper, all things considered, than they were twenty years ago, and that the 'work' is less durable is admitted on all hands. It may be argued that this may be true as regards mere plain sewing of the 'seam, gusset, and band' kind, but that as regards what may be called the higher branches of needlework the consumer is immensely advantaged; as, for example, taking the question of ladies' apparel, including their elaborately adorned robes, skirts, and flounces. In the old time it was not the cost of the material that 'ran into the money'; it was the wages paid the seamstress for the thousands of slow stitches she set. All this, however, is now altered. With a machine needle flying at the rate of five hundred stitches per minute the vendor can afford to sell a profusely ornamented article for very little more than the sum required one time for the plainest. But this is a mere question of fashion, and its votaries, presumably persons of position and affluence, could well afford to pay for their extravagant whims and fancies. But it may be said the operations of the sewing-machine have enabled persons in humble life to cultivate a superior style of dress, and to gratify their taste for the artistic and elegant as well as their superiors in social position. But there are two sides to this picture. It is anything but certain that because the shop-girl and Mary Ann the housemaid may now revel in their yearning for flounces and embroidery their social happiness is enhanced. No doubt it is possible to be too severely exacting as regards the

style and manner in which our domestics should be permitted to attire themselves. There are those, exemplary and charitable people in every other respect, who would deny their female servants the harmless vanity of a cap-ribbon, and would take it gravely amiss if it came to their knowledge that cook was accustomed to wear a feather in her holiday bonnet, or took secret pleasure in a parasol. At the same time it is equally true that a hankering after dress incompatible with her station in life has proved the rock on which the prospects of many a maid in the kitchen has come to wreck and ruin. It is not at all surprising that the maid, no less than the mistress, should take pride in personal adornment. It is human nature to do so; a weakness that dates back beyond the memory of civilisation. It is very well for my lady to call out from the drawing-room to Cinderella amongst the pots and unwashed dishes in the kitchen below, 'Cinder' (she would, of course, abbreviate her handmaiden's baptismal appellation to some extent),— 'Cinder, know thyself, and presume not to ape the manners of thy betters.' Cinderella is not so easily intimidated. Probably she *does* know herself. She has looked into her looking-glass—well, at least a dozen times, and the result has been a cumulative strengthening of her original preposterous idea that, given the means and the money possessed by some one she knows (not, of course, meaning her mistress), she could turn out as smart and attractive a figure as the best. As attractive, that is to say, to those for whom she aspires to have attraction: for the curly-haired foreman at the butcher's; the spruce young baker, who has already risen from a barrow to a pony-cart; or the equally

prosperous bachelor greengrocer, who removes goods by means of spring-vans. It is only to be expected that the sex intended by Nature to be admired by the other sex should do their best, whatever their condition in life, towards seconding the amiable design of the original mother. They will do so instinctively, and even when admirers are out of the question—at least it has been known to happen so in savage regions. Travellers tell us that amongst the barbarous Dyaks of Borneo, vanity runs to such a height amongst the female population that a slave will commonly purloin the 'jewelry' of her mistress, the chief's wife, consisting mainly of spikes like darning-needles for the ears and golden bangles for the nose—not to wear publicly, for that would be to acknowledge the theft and to bring on herself the penalty of instant death; not to fascinate a sooty swain of her own degree, but to retire to some sequestered spot in the dense forest, where there happens to be a clear pool of water, there to adorn her organs of smell and hearing with the stolen ornaments, for the solitary pleasure of contemplating her bedizened self in the watery mirror. When she has for the time satisfied the cravings of her woman nature she hides the precious things in a hole, and there they remain; and she returns to her duties until the vain fit assails her again, and she retires for another and another solitary treat, until her iniquity is discovered, when, in accordance with the customs of the country, off comes her head, ear-spikes, nose-rings, and all.

I never thought when I set out that the wings of my distrust of the sewing-machine as the needle-woman's friend would carry me to Borneo for an illustration. It

is time I got back, and to make it understood that the girl labour in London question involves many other kinds of employment besides the monstrosly hard-worked ill-remunerated 'machinist.' Take the case of the shop-girl, wherever we find her. It would be difficult to estimate the number of young women who find employment in some way or other 'behind the counter,' but it may be taken as a fact that at least three-fourths of those who are so circumstanced have much more hardship to endure than a humane public are aware of, or would tacitly encourage were the case fairly and fully laid before them. One need not go beyond the drapery business for an example. There is said to be a growing disposition on the part of employers to hire only male assistants, but in certain departments of the business this would be for obvious reasons impracticable. There must be female assistants at the linendrapers—there are many hundreds of them; but why, in the name of common charity, should they be more hardly used, as regards incessant labour and the number of hours they are kept at it, than washerwomen and cinder-sifters in a dust-

yard? It is notorious that in many establishments in the metropolis the 'young ladies,' as they by a cruel mockery are designated, appear in the shop at eight in the morning, and there remain, with brief intervals for meals, until ten at night. On Saturdays—I am now speaking of neighbourhoods where a different system of business is carried on from that at the West-end—they are in the habit of commencing business half an hour earlier, and leaving off an hour later, thus making the day's work *fifteen hours* long, and the invariable rule at such places is that on no account whatever must a young lady sit down while she is in the shop. No one can be aware of what kind of torture it is to be compelled to stand hours after the legs are weary with the weight of the body but those who have been compelled to endure it. The result is one which only a medical man could properly describe, and the number of young women drapers' assistants who by the inhuman rule, 'no sitting down,' are driven to obtain medical advice would very much surprise, and doubtlessly shock, the linendrapers' lady patrons.



WINDOW GARDENING.

'My plants are my only comfort,' said a lady whose domestic surroundings were far from happy. A plant has helped an almost helpless prisoner to avoid giving way to utter despair. A plant has encouraged a traveller in the wilderness to persist in his trackless onward journey. A plant in the heart of an overgrown city soon comes to be regarded as the pet of the household.

Under circumstances much more propitious than those, when a large garden is unattainable, a few plants to cultivate and watch are still a never-failing solace. They amuse our leisure, they relieve our working hours. They supply the mind with matter for thought, while they delight the eye by their form and colour. Their growth and increase excite interest, without ever giving rise to serious anxiety. They add to the pleasures of the day unalloyed by the risk of causing sleepless nights. They afford the opportunity of graceful gifts, to be recompensed by some welcome exchange. A few plants would therefore seem to be an almost indispensable part of every healthy-minded individual's belongings.

But if he has no plot of ground wherein to grow them, where can he find needful accommodation better than on his inner window-sill? If too narrow, it may be easily widened by a movable table of exactly the same height and length as itself, which can be made of deal by any ordinary carpenter. Its width will depend on the size of the apartment and

the space available. A width of eighteen or twenty inches, I find, affords room for a good many plants, allowing to each a fair share of light, if properly placed in respect to their stature. Even if he possess a patch of garden ground, the window will still be the welcome receptacle and home of certain favourites, nurslings, or curiosities, which are special objects of care or attachment. In this way even the grand horticulturist may acquire the honourable title of a window gardener.'

For, please *nota bene*, I do not accord that rank to persons who merely fill their windows with plants; who buy barrowfuls of the first-forced showy things that come to hand, and stick them in the sunshine or the shade, as it may be, according to the aspect of their rooms, and not in view of the plants' requirements; who let them live, if they can resist neglect, or die, either of drought and starvation, or of waterings intended to suffice for the week; who then throw out their dead without remorse, because they know they can go and buy barrowfuls more, equally unsuited, by forced growth or natural constitution, for the change, and equally certain to meet the same fate.

No; such a system of garnishing windows is not window gardening. The true window gardener is one who rears and cultivates his plants himself—of course he must purchase now and then, to obtain new things or fill up vacancies; one who can honestly declare, exactly as if he were a

competitor at a horticultural show, 'This plant has been in my possession so many months, under my own personal care, culture, or supervision, as your rules and regulations properly require.' The beauty of a window plant is that it should be perfectly well cultivated. A dandelion well grown and flowered in a pot would call forth more approval (especially in crowded and stuffy lanes in smoky cities where dandelions are unknown) than scraggy oleanders, or long-legged pelargoniums, though excuses are accepted, under such conditions, for everything that carries a bit of green on its stalk; still more if it can show a little scrap of white, red, yellow, or blue. *Appropos* to dandelions, our French and Belgian neighbours cultivate extensively for salad, to be blanched by earthing up (pretty, then, to the eye, as well as pleasant to the taste), improved broad-leaved varieties of this brave bright-blossomed plant, which suffers so unjustly from its horrid vulgar name. For those who have the courage to try it, the seed is in the trade, to be had of Vilmorin, Paris, and Van Houtte, Ghent. But what true-born Briton would stoop to eat dandelion, unless laid up at the Pole with scurvy?

Window gardening is one of the privileges accorded to our northern and insular climate. In the south of Europe (and most parts of the centre) it is impracticable nearly all summer long, because people are obliged to exclude all sunshine and a good deal of light by outside shutters. The glare and heat, reflected as well as direct, would otherwise be insupportable indoors. Rooms kept from sunrise till sunset scrupulously closed in semi-obscurity may bleach plants, but will hardly grow them. External balco-

nies are decorated, often effectively, with heat-supporting rock-loving flowers, which resist drought and enjoy sunshine, such as mesembrianthemums, carnations, pinks, snapdragons, sedums, and other succulents—anything, in short, which will thrive on a wall, resist winds, and take care of itself; but a true window garden is a forbidden luxury.

In window gardening your choice of plants must be guided, first, by the possibility of growing them in your window; next, by your individual tastes, preferences, and objects. Inside the window, the temperature never rises beyond a certain point, varying just a few degrees according to season and the feelings of the human occupants of the apartment, but never reaching equatorial heat, nor even approaching to it. The dryness of the air in living-rooms is maintained to promote the health of families, and not to meet the indispensable requirements of many magnificent ornaments of the vegetable kingdom. Never does it attain the hot saturation by moisture pervading the tropical forest wherein those beauties luxuriate. Outside the window, in a balcony, it is needless to point out that the list of plants which will thrive under the still less favourable conditions of varying temperature and exposure to winds is even more restricted than it is within doors.

Consequently all undoubtedly hothouse plants must be given up, however much they may flatter the eye or tempt the hope. As a rare exception, any quite new introduction, especially from China, Japan, or even from India, may be tried as an experiment, just to see what it will do and can bear; and the pleasing result may perhaps be obtained that you

have got a new plant which turns out hardier and robust than was expected. Examples are not wanting to justify the risk. The bright yellow-flowered *Corchyrus japonicus*, on its first arrival, was treated as a tender greenhouse plant; so was the hydrangea; even *Weigelia rosea*, partly in order to propagate it rapidly, was subjected to a good deal of coddling. There was a time when, within the memory of my childhood, the monthly China rose was still new enough to be an object of popular desire. A good many people had it, but not everybody; and they nursed it tenderly indoors in pots. Few, if any, ventured to expose it to the perils of the open ground. A cutting of China rose was then an acceptable gift; or, if not given, a thing to be slyly taken—such acts of pilfering do occur even now—by unscrupulous visitors. For conscience is sometimes rendered insensible by the ardour of horticultural acquisitiveness.

Let vegetable strangers, therefore, when really strange and come of promising parentage and origin (not Mexican or South American—although the pampas grass is an honourable exception to their almost general tenderness), be received with benevolent and impartial hospitality. Give them a fair trial; and then, if they prove not up to the mark of window hardihood, leave them to the dons of the damp stove and the orchid-house.

Indeed, one of the charms of a window garden is the facility which it affords for experiment and observation on the habits of plants. Dare I venture to say that a few individuals might be better employed in tending their flowers than in making mischief, political or domestic? No; I had better not say that. A his-

torical anecdote will be more safely placed.

When Alexandre Dumas père published his *Voyage en Espagne*, some twenty-five or thirty years ago, he made known to the world one Adolphe Desbarolles, an original and intrepid artist, then a painter, who, after throwing his palette to the dogs, turned chiromantic fortune-teller, annexing thereto the less successful art of determining character by handwriting, and employing his leisure in the composition of a curious Anglophobic book, *How to Travel in Switzerland for Three Francs per Day*. Two years before the fatal Franco-German war of 1870, Napoleon III., who liked all sorts of divination, allowed Desbarolles to be brought to the Tuileries.

'What do you read in my hand?' asked the Emperor.

The chiromancer hesitated.

'Come, come,' urged the impatient inquirer, 'don't be afraid; tell the whole truth.'

'Well then, sire, if I must speak, I read in your Majesty's hand that for the future you ought to devote your whole thoughts to agriculture.'

It will be an improvement to read 'to window gardening.'

The answer was sibylline, in true Delphic style, and the applicant did not insist upon a clearer oracle.

Subsequently, in explanation of his words, the soothsayer mentioned in confidence to a friend, 'The Emperor did not understand my meaning; nevertheless, it was precise enough. What could "Turn your whole attention to window gardening" signify, except "Don't go to war, and do take care of your health"?' f

Hothouse plants, then, must be relinquished, charming and inviting as many of them are. You

see them in the plant-shops, bright and brilliant; you cannot resist buying them. You take them home, where they linger and languish, lasting sometimes a few days, sometimes a few weeks, sometimes a twelvemonth, according to species, season, and circumstances, the flowers growing fewer, smaller, and finally abortive, the foliage turning yellow, flaccid, and powerless to make healthy growth. Nobody more than myself ought to allow such imprudent purchases to be pardonable; it is not I who have the right to pelt with reproaches those who try to decorate their windows with heat-loving plants. If I had now all the shillings and francs they have cost me, it would make a nice little deposit for a savings-bank. But duty none the less obliges me to warn others of the uselessness of such attempts.

To mention only a few seductive best-let-alones: Gardenias or Cape jasmines, Madagascar periwinkles, the interesting sensitive plant, the still more interesting *Dionea muscipula* (Venus's fly-trap), perhaps gloxinias, lovely though they be, the gold-powdered and the silver-powdered gymno-grammas, with multitudes of other ferns, require more heat than you will find comfortable in your study or breakfast-room. The great majority of *Adiantums* (maidenhair ferns) belong to this category. Even our native *A. capillus veneris*, the true maidenhair, thrives more luxuriantly at a higher temperature than the sun of the United Kingdom gives it, provided there be a sufficient supply of moisture at the root. That, however, with its near relation, *A. cuneatum*, does well and easily as an indoor pot-plant. The same of *A. pedatum* and a very few others of that numerous genus. The rest, so graceful and some-

times so expensive, must be regretfully given up.

True, wealthy amateurs, with ranges of houses, cool, intermediate, and hot, at command, can indulge in the luxury of ringing the bell and ordering a flowering orchid or other vegetable gem to be brought to ornament their drawing-room for three or four days, then sending it back again to be restored to its usual health. But the readers to whom this paper is addressed enjoy no such resources; they have at most a few reserve-plant nursery windows or little home-made greenhouse to fall back upon. Therefore must they renounce silky and velvety marantias and bertolonias, gaudy crotons, likewise numberless scarlet-patched and white-blotched caladiums and other very taking Arads, contenting themselves instead with the humble but popular *Ethiopian arum* and its sister *Richardia*, whose white-spotted leaves, seen from within doors, seem covered with semi-transparent spangles. Cape heaths, too—exceedingly beautiful—are reared under such special treatment that in a window garden they will mostly come to grief, and exemplify the vanity of human wishes.

On the other hand, some plants which are perfectly hardy outdoors, resisting British frosts, still repay the benefit of protection in spring and additional heat afterwards in summer, with liberal interest, either through their imprudently early habit of flowering, or through their coming from a warmer summer climate than ours. Such plants plainly show their gratitude for being indulged with a place in your sunniest window. Amongst them, and to be highly recommended, are—*Deutzia gracilis*, a slender shrub, deciduous, covered with snow-white flowers

in spring, and rapidly responsive to assistance by warmth; *Funkia*, once *Hemerocallis*, alba, one of the Japan day lilies, a herbaceous plant, disappearing in winter, but putting forth in spring its handsome furrowed leaves and, after midsummer, its bouquets of pure white fragrant blossoms. It has varieties with variegated leaves. Other variegated *Funkias* have very ornamental foliage and make excellent pot-plants, with the advantage of being hardy outdoors in winter, although thankful for extra warmth during their season of growth.

Again, many of our native hardy ferns testify to their descent from their fossil ancestors, who prepared coal for us while the earth was still glowing with central heat, by enjoying the temperature of our living-rooms if screened from direct exposure to sunshine. The male fern becomes almost evergreen, and manifests a desire for promotion to tree-fernhood; the sea spleenwort (*Asplenium marinum*), not hardy, though native, makes an everlasting tuft of deep rich green; others increase in delicacy and beauty. *Struthiopteris germanica*, the German ostrich plume, forms a magnificent vase with its sterile fronds after passing through the phase of Prince of Wales's feathers, subsequently putting forth its smaller unpretending fertile fronds. Few hardy ferns repay indoor shelter better than the North American *Onoclea sensibilis* by the brightness of its singular-shaped, satin-veined, bright green fronds.

Other foreigners, who will not bear frost, will yet stand a good deal of knocking about and even neglect. Example, *Aspidistra lurida*, whether the plain-leaved or the striped-leaved variety, an invaluable town plant, which cheer-

fully endures, as if nothing had happened, sunshine or shade, draughts of air, dust if removed by occasional spongings, and puttings in a corner, as if it were a naughty plant—which it isn't. The foliage resembles a magnified tuft of lily-of-the-valley leaves, and the flowers, although utterly unlike that model of elegance and sweetness, are curious and interesting, being almost subterranean. Like moles after a hard struggle with a clayey soil, they just manage to get their heads above ground, open their mouths, and breathe a little air. Their colour is dingy purple-brown, whence, perhaps, the specific name *lurida*. *Aspidistra* is perennial, and makes a handsomer tuft the older it grows, if liberally treated by shifting into a larger pot when cramped for root-room, and encouraged by small timely doses of weak liquid manure made with sheep's droppings steeped in water left to stand till clear, or manufactured by other means which will occur to the ingenious amateur. To *aspidistra*'s other merits may be added that it is not expensive, and that it will last a lifetime, unless made the victim of wilful murder.

Another interesting set of plants which present difficulties not insurmountable in their window culture are the numerous genera and species which, while satisfied with the temperature of our living-rooms, yet require a much moister atmosphere. What is to be done with these? How are they to be treated to keep them in health? For they are well worth a little pains. Amongst these are bog plants, some exquisitely delicate and beautiful, often remarkably curious, in their structure and habits. Such are the sundews (*Droseras*), notorious of late for their carnivorous propensities,

with their jewelled but treacherous leaves glittering in the sun and inviting inspection with a pocket lens. The bog pimpernel is a delightful little plant. *Parnassia*'s pretty white flowers (autumnal) present a structure which long has puzzled botanists. Dripping rocks, damp woods, moist shady glens, sometimes surprise you by their riches of vegetable rarities. The traveller or the excursionist, tempted to carry off a few, asks himself how he shall be able to keep them alive at home, even if he cannot make them flourish. The apparent insolubility of the problem only excites his desire for its successful solution.

He bethinks himself of a Wardian case. But the Wardian, mostly devoted to ferns, is a window garden in itself, and is too much of one thing for those who like variety and change. A simpler, less cumbersome, and more manageable plan is to grow each plant separately under a bell-glass, a trifle less in diameter than the inside of the pot which it covers. Such horticultural bell-glasses are not expensive, and may be had of various sizes. Instead of ordinary flower-pots, I find it convenient to use for these purposes shallow pans, seven inches in diameter inside, and three in depth, of course with a hole in the centre for drainage. If not to be found ready-made, a potter will hardly refuse to make them to order. Few of the plants to be grown in them are deep-rooted. Having their habitat on the surface of rocks, or trailing superficially amongst pebbles and moss, a depth of three inches is more than enough. The pans are also useful at other times for raising and pricking out choice seedling plants. To judge of their utility for our purpose, the next time you take a

country walk, collect a few pretty patches of moss, plant them on light earth and pebbles in a pan; after moistening, cover with a bell-glass, keep them on the shady side of your house, and in a few days you will see. The mosses will show signs of enjoying their new home, by putting forth their miniature beauties. In fact, grand horticulturists, in their propagating-houses (where glass over glass covers foreign weaklings in the course of propagation), often have to plant their fragmentary cuttings in, or to surround them with, moss. And they have told me that when they see the shut-up moss begin to grow it is a good sign that the growth of the nurslings is in a fair way to follow.

Most of these delicate moisture-loving plants are believed to be also in absolute need of shade; but, with the exception of many mosses and other cryptogams (not all), I have not found it to be so in a state of Nature. In bogs and wide-spread marshes, trees and shrubs are neither common nor numerous; consequently marsh plants are exposed to the full glare of noontide sunshine. The same of many plants that grow on dripping rocks; they will thrive in the shade, they will thrive in the sun. What they *must* have is continued, not stagnant, moisture. If analysed, they might be found to consist of ninety-nine and three-quarters per cent of water. Certainly their solid matter would bear the smallest imaginable proportion to the whole.

It was thus that I lately fell upon an old acquaintance and favourite, *Pinguicula grandiflora*, the large-flowered butterwort, basking in the centre of a treeless upland Pyrenean valley, where there was neither a leaf nor a cloud to screen it from the sun-

mer sun. It grew upon stones amongst which spring water trickled, where it would always be cool at root; it also grew on the sides of boulders which must sometimes be tolerably hot; but wherever it grew, moisture would rarely, if ever, be absent.

The window gardener who should lovingly take this *pingicula* under his patronage (as a representative of moisture-loving as well as of insect-eating plants) would scarcely regret the experiment. With me, it is kept as a souvenir of a pleasant visit to the Daughters of Fire—earthquakes are sometimes felt at various points of the chain; but he need not fear that it is unattainable nearer home. Not to mention Messrs. Backhouse's establishment, York, it is a very common plant, Mr. James Graves, of Inisnag, tells us, in all the mountains round Killarney and Glengarriffe. He has found it at Inisnag and elsewhere in quantities, where it often gets trodden by cattle, the leaves of the plants being crowded in many instances with captured insects in various stages of absorption and decay.

Pingicula lusitanica also grows at Glengarriffe, county Cork. This species is even a more potent fly-trap than *P. grandiflora*. Its naturally incurved leaf-margins are excited to curve still further inwards by contact both with organic and inorganic bodies. Another delicate species, *P. alpina*, is much prized by lovers of alpine plants. At Hazlewood, Sligo, *P. grandiflora* has naturalised itself on a mossy rock, from plants introduced from their native habitat some years ago. They are growing admirably without any soil at all, except what feeding and protection they get from the moss and rain—a hint, this, to utilise any seed that may be produced under cultivation.

How pretty this innocent-looking butterwort is may be seen from the charming woodcut in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* for July 10, 1875. Unfortunately it is too large for reproduction here. The editor's courtesy, however, allows us to give on the next page the smaller design for an outside window garden. The butterwort referred to above is admirably drawn by Mr. W. G. Smith, from a specimen supplied by Mr. Alex. Dean, who grows it under such simple modes of culture as to render it a matter for wonder that so interesting a plant should not be more frequently met with. The observations published by Mr. Darwin and Dr. Hooker on the insectivorous properties of the *pingiculas* have lately drawn attention to them; but the beauty of this butterwort gives it a special interest for horticulturists. Mr. Dean's stock came from Northumberland, and he believes that the blooms are improved by cultivation; also, that pans four inches in depth suit it better than pots, as the plant does not require depth of soil so much as plenty of moisture and room to expand its side shoots, which are thrown out in abundance in the autumn.

In winter, Mr. Dean houses it, kept sufficiently moist, in any cool place. In the Pyrenees it is housed under snow, often a yard or more thick. In March, crowded plants may be pulled to pieces, replanted in pans of fresh soil, just fixing them to it, sprinkling freely with water twice a day, and giving, I would add, assistance of the bell-glass, and avoiding division of the plants until it became absolutely necessary. If all goes well, blooms will appear about the middle of April. The length of time the plants remain in flower depends upon the strength of the crowns; it may last six weeks.

They may be grown out of doors, if kept well watered. Although the butterwort is termed a bog plant, it is a mistake to grow it in poor hungry peat. It likes its soil to be light, loose, and rich, and insists on its being continually moist.

And all this gossip has been going on without my asking whether you prefer for your window striking plants that make a great show and so attract the public gaze, or plants principally

for your own enjoyment and edification, with some special interest attached to each species! It is high time to put the question, did not the pile of manuscript beside me cry, 'Halt! Stand at ease! Wipe your pen, and post your contribution.' But 'the whole,' saith the axiom, 'is greater than its part.' A complete treatise on window gardening cannot be compressed into the space of an article.

E. S. D.





LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY 1877.

SIR WILLIAM W. GULL.

A Social Sketch.

WE all of us know something, directly or indirectly, about medicine and medical men; and most of us like to have this knowledge from a social rather than from a purely personal point of view. It is said that every good woman has her pet doctor and her pet parson; so we may be excused for speaking a little about the doctors, and about one very eminent physician in particular. Doctors are not only scientific lights, but they are also great social powers. Sir W. W. Gull has both achieved greatness, and has had greatness forced upon him. Other physicians may be as great—there may be private opinions that there are still greater men—but the stress of circumstances has made him noted beyond his brethren. Ever since he was the devoted medical attendant of the Prince of Wales, in what was a real crisis of national feeling and history, his name has been a household name. And his name has been kept before the public by circumstances that invite and warrant some little discussion. We read, in the life of Mr. Kingsley, how the Prince sent him down to Evers-

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ley, if perchance the great doctor could heal the great author. We hear of him running down to a southern watering-place to attend the Prime Minister, when his health is a subject of anxiety to his friends, and causes rumours of a resignation. We find him in the witness-box in the most exciting judicial drama of recent days. Sir William is in fashion just now. If a man is ill, he will 'go and see Gull.' If he is very ill indeed, he will ask his regular attendant to 'call in Gull' for a consultation. It is a pity that not only genuine invalids, but frivolous people who fancy themselves ill, on frivolous pretences, will insist on the consolation of having the popular and fashionable doctor to attend them. It is not so easy, however, to obtain the luxury. The man is not superhuman, and must limit his work by his possibilities. It is supposed to be the most rational plan to write and make an appointment. It is highly probable that an appointment cannot be made—so you are informed by the secretary—till the lapse of a week or a fortnight. This is all very well in the case of a real

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chronic illness; but an acute attack will not wait for this sort of thing. The medical problem involved *solvitur ambulando*. We have heard of doctors who have called rather late, and have found that the patient is either dead or got quite well. There is something arbitrary and fluctuating in mere fashion. We have sometimes meditated on what may be the elements of success, which give the London doctors who are called the fashionable doctors such enviable success above their brethren. It is not merely a matter of skill and experience. There may be unknown practitioners in the provinces who are as good as the most famous and fashionable in the metropolis. No possible amount of learning and ability can of itself make a man fashionable. The learning and ability may be there, but the art of rising in the world has private methods of its own besides. Whatever else a doctor studies, he has to study human nature on its social and its selfish side. Most visits that a doctor pays in medical cases are hardly material to the case. But he has to soothe or tone down a patient, to encourage or stimulate him, to talk pleasant conversation or give pleasant prescriptions, to insure rest and leisure for the reparative processes of Nature; and, as far as possible, to chime in with the wishes and vagaries of the patient. This is the method by which many a medical man has deservedly made himself popular; and popularity is almost convertible with fashion.

Sir William Gull is one of those who, greatly to their honour, have sprung from the ranks. When the worthies of our modern day are enumerated, he will be found among the self-raised men. His parents, we believe, still living, are humble

people in Suffolk. The extreme precocity and thoughtfulness of the boy attracted the attention of powerful friends, who sent him to school and college. After leaving the University he was, we are told, for some time engaged in private tuition. An accident, it is said, first brought him into connection with Guy's Hospital. He has always said that Guy's laid the foundation of his fortunes, and that there he spent his happiest years. He was employed to arrange the catalogue of the museum and the library of Guy's. This was the laying of the foundation of his professional tastes. It introduced him into a region for which he possessed a natural affinity. We believe that he has passed through every stage in the profession, and is the possessor of every kind of diploma that can be given. He has that of Apothecaries' Hall, that of a surgeon, that of the Royal College of Physicians. For many arduous years he worked at Guy's, where his lectures attracted great attention. He was especially recognised as an authority in cerebro-spinal cases. His first work, which attracted a great deal of notice in the profession, dealing with a subject of permanent vital importance, was a report, which, in conjunction with Dr. Baly, he drew up on the subject of Asiatic cholera; a work which has always retained its place as a text-book on the subject. He exemplifies Tennyson's lines—

'Use gave me fame,
And fame again, increasing, gave me use.'

He achieved a large City practice, and, like other prosperous City doctors, betook himself to the West-end.

Sir William has always been a devoted enthusiast of medicine. He believes devoutly in the great

achievements of medicine, in the grand possibilities of its future. He has faith in himself and in his art. It is this which enables him to sustain the enormous pressure of his professional duties, which must often carry him to a point beyond fatigue-point. Sir Henry Holland was a very eminent physician in his day, but he decided that he would not carry his work beyond a certain point. He determined to limit his moderate views to an income of five thousand a year. He considered that all beyond was superfluous luxury. He regularly had his three months' holiday. He was a man also who went very extensively into the society and recreations of his day. In the case of such a man as Sir William Gull fixed limits of any kind appear an impossibility. It is difficult to see when he has an opening for food or talk or restful change. Nothing in the shape of gain could compensate him for his work and his deprivations. Nothing short of an 'enthusiasm of humanity,' the belief that he is a minister of healing in cases which can bring hope and amelioration of condition to the suffering, could sustain him under this enormous persistent pressure.

The life of a physician in full practice is at all times an arduous one. There is hardly any time that he can call his own. His labour begins as soon as he is awake. His correspondence is generally of a heavy character. People write to consult him from a distance—old patients who have gone away from town; new patients who cannot come up. His memory and memoranda are constantly at work. It is to be presumed that the poor man has a wife and a family, but owing to the press of his engagements he can be only slightly acquainted

with them. He takes his breakfast as he can; it is frequently as the bread of affliction and the water of affliction to him. Perhaps there are one or two cases which have come to him at an early hour; perhaps there are one or two so urgent that he must attend to them at once; perhaps there is a consultation that must come off at the earliest available moment. These absolute necessities being disposed of and breakfast partially despatched, the physician settles himself to receive his callers. He will try, if possible, to get ten minutes' drive or walk in the open air. It is not his least trial that he knows perfectly what the laws of hygiene are, and also knows perfectly that in his own case he is constantly obliged to violate them. The stream of visitors begins slenderly, but swells apace. It is quite obvious that when a man's time is limited and his popularity unlimited, he cannot every day see everybody who calls upon him that day. We sometimes fancy that there must be a kind of backstairs influence, and that a few patients get the start of those who are waiting in the dining-room. Obviously a cabinet minister or an archbishop might be supposed to have some right of priority. On an average each visit takes up a quarter of an hour. At last the time comes when he is obliged to go out to see his patients. His carriage has been kept at the door until he knows that he ought to have started long ago. The room next the consulting-room is full of patients, but he has not time to see them. The lunch is waiting, but he has hardly time to take a mouthful. Perhaps he takes Liebig's *Extractum Carnis* with him, or in some sort of way has lunch in his carriage. He is recognised from the window as the

carriage leaves his house, and disappointed patients must console themselves as they best may. Then comes the long round of visits. The carriage is fitted up almost like Napoleon's at Waterloo. There are books, newspapers, instruments, letters, memoranda, a whole apparatus. The intervals of time between the calls are utilised to the utmost extent. At last he gets back to the well-earned eight-o'clock dinner. But he can never make quite sure that he will be permitted to appropriate that dinner. It is just possible that he may, and that he may be able to get some relaxation for an hour or two. But on the other hand he may be obliged to eat his dinner with his loins girded and prepared for an immediate exodus. Some new and urgent call may have come; some very nervous patient may insist on another visit; or there is some case in which he is peculiarly anxious, and knows that he ought to give two or three visits. Not only is there this evening work, but he cannot make quite sure that he will not be rung up in the night. It may be very well understood that it is the common feeling in the profession that this extra work when the day's labour is done ought to be specially remunerated. Indeed many physicians lately came to a resolution that, considering the advance in prices all along the line, they must raise the scale of fees, and take two guineas instead of one. This is the sort of thing which, according to the law of supply and demand, naturally arranges itself without taking any formal shape. The above sketch does not apply to only one or two men in the profession, but to many men who have made themselves specialists in their department, and to all of high standing.

In the case of a man like Sir William, conditions similar to these must exist; to a considerable extent practice exceeds the ordinary limits. In addition to these, the physician is liable to be called on at any time to make long special journeys to see patients at a distance. The old theory was that his pay should be at the rate of a guinea a mile; but in these railway days the extra miles hardly require so many extra guineas, and an arrangement is made. The fees for these railway journeys are always considerable, but they are hardly coveted by men in large practice, as a good deal of town business is unavoidably lost. The great reparative process for a doctor, in addition to that care and caution which he always employs so far as he can, is in the summer, when the season is over, and he gets comparative leisure. But there is no time in which he has not a great deal to do; and he is fortunate if in a general way he can get a whole month in which to recruit his jaded energies and store up a fresh supply of vitality against the coming campaign.

The illness of the Prince of Wales was the event which made the reputation of Sir William Gull so truly national. He had been a lecturer of Guy's Hospital for four-and-twenty years when he was called away by a sudden summons to Sandringham. This was not, however, his first introduction to the Prince, as he had previously attended him. The Prince had been struck down by the commonest and deadliest of diseases, typhoid fever, the most fatal and the most easily preventible of disorders. We talk of Bulgarian atrocities; but every year there are atrocities far more dreadful committed in this country by the butchery of some hundred thousand people whose lives might be

saved by some care and common sense. The average duration of life in England has been lengthened several years on clear historical evidence; there is no reason why the average length of human life should not extend say seven years more, if only people could be advised to give anything like the same attention to prevention which they do to cure. It is to be said to the credit of the doctors, by whom an increase of business would naturally be regarded with not unfavourable eyes, that they insist loudly and constantly on the demands of sanitary reform; but it is the insensate army of their patients who will not consent by timely care to abbreviate the labours of the medical man. Royalty itself was stricken down, and the whole land became learned for a while on the pathology of typhoid fever. Dr. Gull packed up his portmanteau and started at once for Sandringham. We will not say that his patients were left to look after themselves, for there is no lack of able men to help such a man at such a need. Sir William was in attendance night and day at Sandringham, and lavished human watchfulness and skill. There was nothing that he did not do for the Prince. He was not only physician but nurse. That memorable illness is a glorious page in our English history. To all human seeming it could only end fatally. We were hoping against hope. It was almost only the great London physician who held that while there was life there was hope. In answer to a nation's prayers our Prince was given back to us. But the human means of preserving life were mainly the treatment and constant attendance of Dr. Gull. This proud and glorious position will give him a lasting name and his own proper niche in the history of the reign.

It is not that a thousand other brave men would not equally have done their very best; but the supreme chance came to this particular individual, and he used it to the very best. Hardly any rank or remuneration could adequately repay such services; but the Queen, with the applause of the public and the profession, conferred on him a baronetcy. This is the limit beyond which medical honours in this country are not supposed to go. Yet France had its Baron Nélaton: and perhaps the Crown will so far compromise between tradition and justice that, when a great physician has realised a fortune and retired, the British peerage will admit him within its ranks. The House of Lords is constantly recruited with accessions from the bar; and certainly the profession of medicine is at least as salutary and blessed as the profession of arms or of the law.

The great way in which a physician like Sir William Gull obtains a reputation, and is of so much public service, is, of course, in his clinical capacity, that is to say, at the bedside of a patient. We may say that there is clinical theology when a parson goes from one bedside to another, or even clinical friendship when a good fellow goes to see his friends who are ill. Clinical medicine is separable as a distinct province of medical science. Or, rather, it is medicine as an art distinguished from medicine as a science. A man may have any amount of book-knowledge or of scientific knowledge, and yet be a failure, clinically speaking. We have even heard of a clever man who, if he were told of a case of obscure illness, could easily write a clever essay about it, but brought to the bedside would be unable to recognise the case. In clinical medicine a great phy-

sician has his proper field. He has worked in libraries, but after a time his patients are his library, each patient an entirely new book. He has not got to work at scientific methods or their subject-matter, physiology, chemistry, action of drugs, and so on. It is to be presumed that he has studied all these things before. He is now concerned with the application of them to the individual sufferer before him. He has that patient to study, and little else besides. He has to study some special portion of the frame, some particular state of body, the history of his previous ailments. He knows that all acute diseases are chronic, that all pathology is physiology, that there is a tendency to death which he has to encounter and check at each turn. No two medical cases are exactly like each other, just as no two leaves, two faces, two sunsets are exactly alike. Men are often preferred as physicians because they have had a great deal of experience, and undoubtedly clinical science is built upon experience. But, over and above experience, which may often result in empiricism, there is a distinct gift of genius in the department of clinical medicine. We speak as outsiders, but it seems to us that this gift especially distinguishes Sir William Gull; at least he is generally accredited with it. There may be other men just as able, but their ability has not in the same degree become famous. The chief thing with which a great physician is concerned is his diagnosis. He has to tell the man precisely what is the matter with him, the seat and source of injury. We have heard of Dr. Gull doing extraordinary things this way, detecting at once the nature of obscure illnesses which had long baffled conjecture and investigation. Now there have been great

physicians who have established a vast reputation in diagnosis, but have stopped at this point. They have managed the diagnosis, which is the main difficulty and the point of main interest, and then any one is competent to deal with the treatment. Now that is not Sir William's view. The treatment, the therapeutics of the subject are of powerful and absorbing interest. His treatment in its audacity and generalship, in difficult and apparently hopeless cases, is said to be very remarkable. He is 'the daring pilot in extremity, pleased with the danger when the storm runs high.' He has shown a fertility of resource, an incapacity of being beaten, indicating what we have called medical generalship. Details of his practice have at times come before us, both curious and interesting, of a brilliant and original kind, but such details are best left in silence or the semi-silence of the scientific journals.* We cannot, however, avoid referring to what we know of kindly aid given amidst his hardest work to those beaten down by the storms of life — cases in which his careful timely opinion has breathed fresh hope, and so infused fresh life.

One of the most remarkable of Sir William Gull's appearances was made at the Bravo inquest. Few of those who attended that inquest will ever forget the remarkable scene. The mystery and the tragedy of the subject were remarkable, and transcended most conceptions of the romancists. But the scene of the inquest was most grotesque and picturesque, and the play of wits among doctors and lawyers most remarkable.

* The reader might consult a remarkable paper of Sir William Gull's on Clinical Medicine in a well-known book, *Medicine in Modern Times*, 1869.

The happy florid-looking coroner was like an amiable shuttlecock, tossed to and fro among the battledores of the sharpest legal practitioners of the day. The room was hung with hunting pictures, and presented a curious amalgamation of a billiard-room and a court of justice. It was within a stone's cast of the railway; the windows were more or less open, and the sounds of the incessant trains were most harassing. Again and again there was a pause till the train had rushed by, and a large amount of public time was thus lost. There was a larger array of reporters than we have ever seen in any law-court, larger than in the gallery of the House of Commons. Never before or since have we seen such a tragic comedy as then was. Witnesses whose evidence was regarded with interest or suspicion or both were conveyed in and out, and all kinds of gossip and rumour went abroad respecting them. Then the court, as a court, would adjourn to liquor up. A roaring tavern business went on at the bar, and there was a daily ordinary, at which fine gentlemen sat down with men who sat in their shirt-sleeves and put their knives into their mouths. The great men engaged had, of course, their places of private resort. It was on this occasion that we first saw Sir William. His evidence excited universal remark. At this time the names of Gull and Gully were in the mouths of every one. There was something very remarkable in his appearance. In the shape of his head—and the idea is helped by the pallor of his complexion—he is more like the portrait of the first Napoleon than any other man that we have ever seen. He was, of course, observed with great interest, and listened to with much respect. When the clever soli-

citor, who was supposed to be a sort of prosecutor in the matter, was somewhat flippant and offensive in his examination, he received a stately put down which will probably tend towards 'his soul's health and the reformation of his manners.' Sir William, in an impressive way, delivered a narrative which unfortunately was in direct conflict with the statements of a very eminent practitioner, Dr. Johnstone. He said that he was brought to the bedside of the dying man in total ignorance of symptoms and circumstances; that he immediately detected that it was a case of metallic poisoning; that he desired that the responsibility should rest upon no other shoulders than his own; that he accordingly explained to the dying man in what case he was, and besought him to throw what light he could upon the matter, to prevent injury to the innocent. Now all this is in direct opposition to the statement of Dr. Johnstone, that when driving down to Balham he explained all the circumstances of the case. The conflict of testimony certainly seems extraordinary. But there is not the least necessity for supposing any deviation from accuracy on the part of either of these distinguished men. Those who have ever had much to do with the statements of conflicting authorities, whether in the matter of historical evidences or the giving of testimony in courts of law, are aware that there are often most contradictory statements made when each party is honestly desirous of ascertaining the truth and telling the truth. Yet there is frequently an utter incompatibility between the two accounts, and a total incapacity on every hand to explain the discrepancy. The discrepancy is

often susceptible of a very natural explanation. One man may have had his attention directed to one set of circumstances, and the mind of another may have been occupied with another set. Or a man may have the circumstances before him shaped and coloured by his own prepossessions. Or a man may be so absorbed in his own thoughts and anticipations that the information poured out to him is received unheedingly, unreceptively. Some circumstances certainly appear very odd and impossible to be explained. But the odd and the apparently impossible are exactly the things that happen. When we have two honest men together, nothing is a greater mistake than to quarrel with the man who contradicts you flatly. You must take it on trust that there is an explanation possible, though you do not see it. A good deal of quarrelling might be obviated in the world at large by the exercise of some charity and breadth of view. Unfortunately the great doctors did not exactly see this. Dr. Johnstone was about to lay a complaint against Sir William Gull, when Sir William anticipated matters by bringing a complaint against Dr. Johnstone. They went before an august body, of whose existence the outside public had previously very little information, the Censors of the College of Physicians. It would have been a good thing if there had been similar boards in other professions. In the army, for instance, it would have saved an incalculable number of lives if there had been a court of honour to take cognisance of differences. Of all etiquette in the world medical etiquette seems to us to be the most terrible and touchy. We do not find fault with etiquette. Reduced to its simplest terms it is after all only a system of rules

which in the long-run society has found to be for the good of its weaker members. It is especially a profession like medicine, dealing with the most delicate and tremendous interests, that should be fenced with a system of rules and opinions. The Censors gave a decision which amounted practically to what is called 'a drawn game.'

Medical literature is not very enticing to outsiders. Indeed, as a rule, outsiders had better keep clear of such literature. When a nervous man takes up books about diseases he fancies that he is going to have every illness under the sun, one upon another. Besides, the terminology puzzles him, and when the details of the case are left for the discussion of scientific principles he is more puzzled still. But when these difficulties are got over, nothing is more interesting than to read or to hear—especially to hear—the lecturer. The lecturer knows that great skill, and some allowance for human nature, must be employed in lecturing a class. Ordinarily there is a blaze of illustration. Often there are humorous stories told. Sir William is a capital lecturer. In the medical journals there are reports of his speeches on all kinds of subjects, some of the titles of which are hardly worth giving in these columns. Of more general interest are the lectures delivered at the commencement of the October session to the students—we remember reading a lecture of Dr. Gull's, at Guy's, in 1874, with exceeding interest—and these lectures are fully worthy of the prominent place given them by the more sensible daily papers. Then, again, there are medical societies, in which there are a great deal of lively information and an abundant supply of anecdote.

Such are the Clinical Society and the Chirurgical Society, where we have known him speak. Still there is a great deal of somewhat horrifying talk. Sir William Gull discusses what sort of cancer he would prefer if he should be obliged to have it; he has no violent prepossession in favour of any form, but cancer in the eye is soonest detected and soonest cut away. A good deal of friendly freedom of debate is employed in these scientific parliaments. On one occasion Sir James Paget had opened a subject. Now Sir James Paget is the very foremost of medical orators. He is quite as much an orator in his way as Mr. Gladstone is in his; indeed there are people who say that Sir James Paget is, all things considered, a greater orator than Mr. Gladstone. Dr. Gull appeared to lead on the opposition side of the question. 'I only wish,' he calmly observed, 'that I had Sir James Paget's power of expression, because, if I had, I think I should be able largely to abolish the charming structure which he has set before us of the constitutional origin of cancers.' Sir William Gull has delivered several of the medical orations—the Gulstonian, the Harveian, the Hunterian. Dr. Lionel Beale, however, published a small volume of strictures on the Harveian oration. The conflict was on the question of vitality. Dr. Gull holds the view that 'life' is a form or mode of ordinary force, that it is correlative motion; Dr. Lionel Beale holds that life is a power entirely different from and in no way correlative with matter and its ordinary forces. Dr. Beale complains that in his Harveian oration Dr. Gull incorrectly accredits him with the assertion that life is not a proper object of investigation, and that the phenomena

of living beings are out of the range of science. He by no means asserts this. His proposition that vital power is distinct from force cannot possibly incapacitate him for physical investigation. We make no apology for mooted this question, which is of increasing interest in all education, and lies at the very threshold of biological inquiries. Dr. Gull's views are substantially akin to those of Huxley, Darwin, and Herbert Spencer. Dr. Beale entirely denies that any form or mode of ordinary force has constructive power. Nature's apparatus and laboratory is a tiny mass of clear transparent structureless stuff; it is the chemist that does the marvellous perfect work. He takes the analogy of the forces that raise the water that drives the wheel, the materials of which the mill is constructed, and the man who builds the mill and sets the water-power at work. It is the principle of vitality that acts on the material elements of the body, shapes its forms, and guides its forces. On this great argument we humbly think that Dr. Gull is in the wrong, and that Dr. Lionel Beale is in the right. To such high argument does medicine proceed, ascending from the most trivial details—if indeed any details can be called trivial—to the most abstruse reasonings and the widest generalisations. Nor can we conclude this paper better than in Sir William's own words, which his own character and career have richly illustrated: 'There is, probably, no human work which daily confers greater good upon society than does ours; and we may feel some justifiable pride, and be encouraged, in spite of all failures, to go on, assured that our future must be one of ever-increasing usefulness and honour.' F. A.

THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.

CHAPTER XVII.

LA VENDANGE.

ONE of the most spiteful tricks of Fate is that in which she so arranges circumstances as to drive people into action before they are ready for it, destroying plans and preparations, nipping prudent counsels in the bud, obliging the most careful and considerate of mankind to do one of two things: either to make a desperate plunge, and trust to its boldness and suddenness for success; or to draw ignominiously back, 'fling away ambition,' give up the dream of months or years, and try vainly and absurdly to persuade themselves that the grapes are sour.

Frank Wyatt found himself brought to this strait on Monday morning, not four-and-twenty hours after his talk with Mme. de Saint-Hilaire in the vineyard. She came into the salon after breakfast with a letter in her hand. Frank was reading the *Union*, which Jacques had just brought in; Agnes was deep in a letter from home; and Marie was giving her fingers a little morning exercise by running them up and down the piano.

'This letter concerns you, Marie,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'What is it, grand'mère?'

'Come and read.'

Marie came forward at once. Her grandmother stood waiting with her hand on the girl's shoulder.

'Well, what do you say?' she said, when Marie had finished.

'Tuesday evening! To-morrow

evening! That is soon, indeed. Mme. de Rochemar seems very happy,' said Marie, leaning her elbows on the piano, with her chin in her hands, and turning her back on the others.

'And you, ma petite?' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, gently stroking her dark hair.

'Of course I am charmed,' said Marie.

'That is quite right. Agnes, Frank, you will be interested to hear that Mme. de Rochemar expects her son home to-morrow evening. She has written at once to tell me. She well knew that we were waiting for him almost as anxiously as herself. No doubt we shall have him here on Wednesday. She invites us all to dine at Rochemar on Thursday.'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire paused, as if she expected a response.

'I am sure Mme. de Rochemar is very kind, and we shall have great pleasure in going,' said Agnes.

'You were saying only yesterday,' said Frank, looking up quite pleasantly from behind his paper, 'that you hoped to introduce me to M. le Marquis. I am very anxious to see him, for my part.'

'Merci, mon ami. Your sentiments are so good that I am sure you and he will be friends at once,' said the Comtesse. 'For the present à revoir. I must write to Mme. de Rochemar, and then I must go to my vendangeurs. You must come into the vineyard presently, Frank, and you too, my dear Agnes. It is a pretty sight enough.'

Agnes very soon acted on her

aunt's invitation. She did not see Marie anywhere about, and Frank seemed disinclined to move from his favourite window seat in the library, where he sat surrounded with books of all shades. So she put on her hat and went out by herself, going through the farmyards, across the shady lane at the top, and into the great vineyard on the side of the hill. On her way she stopped in the yard to look at the vintage work actively going on: two men with bare legs and crimson sabots treading the grapes in the great stone pressoir; a constant stream of red juice flowing down into the cellar beneath; a man carrying it up again by foaming pailfuls, mounting a short ladder, and pouring it into the deep vat, where it was to ferment and make itself into wine. Carts laden with barrels of freshly-cut grapes came rolling into the yard; their contents were emptied into the pressoir, and they set off again, climbing slowly up the hill.

Agnes followed one of these carts, and found her aunt in the upper part of the vineyard, looking on at the work there. About five-and-twenty people were busy in the rows between the vines, cutting off the purple bunches into wooden pails, and emptying these when full into great baskets on the backs of two men, who trudged continually up and down between the grape-cutters and the cart. There were men, women, and girls of all ages, dressed chiefly in blue, the women with spotless caps. They talked a little among themselves as they worked, but very quietly; their manners were grave and gentle, and their brown faces lighted up with pleasant smiles whenever Mme. la Comtesse spoke to them. The great white cart-horse, waiting patiently, nibbled at the tops

of the vines, and very much enjoyed one or two bunches of grapes given it by the men. Agnes brought out a knife and began cutting grapes with the others. It was a soft gray day, without any hot sun to tire the vendangeurs. She found it pleasant work, and thought this was indeed a realisation of Arcadia. She thought of her friends, and how some of them would enjoy such a change as this from their humdrum every-day life; and if she thought of her cousin Marie at all, it was with a feeling of something like envy, and a momentary forgetfulness of M. de Rochemar.

Meanwhile the old chateau on its terrace lay very empty and still. All the servants but the cook had come out to the vineyard, and were busy à vendanger. Frank was alone in the library, and Marie alone up-stairs. And perhaps neither of them was in a frame of mind to make one's own reflections very pleasant company.

Frank presently left his books in a heap on the cushion, and began walking up and down the shining boards, round and round the old billiard-table, stopping now and then to stare up at the bookcases, as if he thought some friendly volume might suddenly leap down and offer him advice and assistance. I daresay he might have found both in this library collected by M. de Saint-Hilaire, who was of a philosophical turn of mind, and had prided himself especially on his splendid editions of Voltaire and Rousseau. Frank went back to his window and sat down again, without invoking these or any other great masters.

Presently he heard a very gentle rustle descending the stairs, and as he sat still in his corner he saw Marie, through the half-open

door, crossing the hall and going out on the terrace. Frank instantly went out, took his hat, and followed her, overtaking her just as she reached the steps. Marie turned round and looked up at him. Her dark eyes were sad and pensive, and she had a book in her hand, *La Femme Sainte*, one of those faithful old companions which had been neglected of late, since English ideas began to make their way at the château.

'I thought you were gone out,' said Marie, after a moment's silence, looking down at her book.

'I have been in the library. What are you going to do?'

'I was going to walk in the avenue and read a little.'

'Let me come with you. You will not want your book. Leave it here on the bench.'

'No,' said Marie, 'I shall keep my book. I think you had better not come.'

'Do not be so very cruel, Marie,' said Frank gently. 'You cannot say that I have been troublesome to you lately. I must speak to you, and this may be my last opportunity. This is not the way that an English girl behaves to her friends,' he said, as his cousin turned away from him with an impatient little sigh.

'Ah, then go back to your English girls. They may listen to you. I must not—I cannot.'

'Marie! where is all our old friendship gone?'

'I do not know. You drove it away yourself. I thought you were good and true and sincere, and I found I had made a mistake. It does not matter. I wish you would leave me in peace.'

'You do not mean what you are saying.'

'Si! Allez-vous-en.'

'Very well,' said Frank. 'If I must go, I must. And no doubt

you will be much happier when I am not here to tell you how a woman with any true greatness would despise such books as that you hold in your hand, and would die sooner than marry herself for the sake of title and riches and "convenience" to a man whom in her heart she detests.'

'I do not detest him,' said Marie; but her voice trembled, and the tears sprang to her eyes.

'No,' said Frank. 'You have not courage or strength of mind enough. But if I were he, I would sooner have your hatred than your cold indifference. Nobody can love who cannot hate. And you suppose yourself to be proud. A strange pride that descends to be sold like a piece of furniture! No one ever spoke to you like this before? No: there never was anyone who loved you well enough—who would risk your anger for the chance of saving you from a lifelong death.'

Marie did not quite know how it happened, but *La Femme Sainte* was lying on the terrace wall, and she and Frank had descended the steps, and were walking slowly towards the avenue. She clasped her hands together in a little agony; every word of his thrilled like an arrow in her poor sensitive brain. She did not know how to answer him, but she must. It was no use being angry and telling him to go away; he would not care for that; he would take no notice. Ah, and was it not true? No one who did not really care for her would dare to interfere with such words as these. Of course he must be made to understand that any change was impossible—but she must try and speak to him gently. While her thoughts were confusing each other, he was going on, more quietly than at first. She hardly heard all he said, but at last she

looked up, stretching out her hands, and beginning to speak quickly and eagerly.

'Frank, it is all very well what you say—that you care for me, and that I shall be unhappy all my life—that I am a wretch to give myself away like this. Ah, but it is cruel of you to tell me all these things, when you know that anything else is impossible. I have always been intended to make this marriage. I have given my word. I cannot draw back. I cannot set myself free, even if I would; and if I had never known you I should never have wished it. Ah, what am I saying? I mean that you are very good to me, but I wish with all my heart that I had never seen you. Because, you know, we could under no circumstances—'

'Pardon,' said Frank quickly. 'Listen to me for a moment, and I will tell you what your grandmother said to me yesterday. You know that since my cousin's death I have a prospect of a large estate in England. Well, my dearest, I told your grandmother yesterday what I should have dared to hope for if you had not been already engaged. I even asked her if the breaking-off of an engagement was a possible thing. Of course she said no. I also ventured to ask what her answer would have been if I with my present prospects had come forward before that other. She said, Marie, that there was no one in the world to whom she would trust you with more confidence.'

'Poor grandmother!' said Marie, sighing. 'She does not know you as I do. She thinks too well of you.'

'That is possible. But it is a fact that she does think well of me. And I believe she would not be sorry if anything happened unexpectedly to render your mar-

riage with M. de Rochemar impossible.'

'Ah, yes, indeed she would. But what in the world could happen? You would be much happier if your brains were not so active,' said Marie. 'Allons! you must learn to be patient and resigned, like me.'

The changeable little lady looked up and smiled, with still tearful eyes. Frank saw that he was regaining all his former influence. He went on quietly, smiling too:

'I was not born with that frame of mind. It may do very well for monks and nuns, but scarcely for people who have to fight their way in the world. I never give up as long as there is a spark of hope remaining.'

'You must have very clever eyes if you can see a spark here.'

'Something more than a spark. At present it is a large flame. Whether it is to remain steady and triumphant, or to die away at once and go out, depends on one person.'

Frank stopped, and looked up and down the avenue in which they were walking. Marie's eyes followed him mechanically.

'I do not understand,' she said, in a low tired voice.

'It depends on you,' said Frank, standing still, and looking at her earnestly. 'On your courage, resolution, and strength of mind. A kind of strength that none of your favourite books have taught you, but which I think a girl of such a race as yours ought to have by nature—strength to rebel against all the "convenances," and to follow the instinct that nature gives you. And one other thing: trust in me. If you will make use of all these, no one shall ever hear another word of your marriage with M. de Rochemar.'

'What do you mean? What am I to do?' said Marie. 'Ah,

you frighten me. It is impossible.'

'Then I had better not say any more,' said Frank.

'Ah!' was the sad little gasp in answer. Mariethrew up her hands, and then wrung them together. She frowned, and looked at Frank with piteous eyes. 'Well, whatever happens, I must be miserable. Tell me what you mean.'

'Then hear me to the end,' said Frank, taking the two poor little hands in his. 'It is the best plan that can be made in such a short time, for whatever is done must be done to-morrow. I daresay it may seem to you a very rash wild thing, and you may be unhappy about it at the time, and persuade yourself that you are doing wrong. But when it is once done you will be thankful. You will be saved from what you are dreading, and you will be sure of a free peaceful life. I will answer for your happiness, when it is once in my hands. And you know you belong to me already.'

'No! how can I?'

'But you do, and I do not mean to give you up. You know very well that no one has the right to dispose of you except yourself. However, that is all settled, and we have not time to talk about it now. Let me tell you my plan. I must go to Paris to-morrow evening, my dearest, to make arrangements for our being married as soon as possible. Patience—listen. You must go with me to-morrow to Carillon, and I shall leave you at the château there with Mme. d'Yves. She is going to Paris, I know, by the late train on Wednesday. You will go with her, and be with her till you belong to me. Will you be brave and good enough to go through with this plan, Marie?'

'Mme. d'Yves!' repeated Marie, gazing at him with astonished

eyes. 'But how can I go to her house?'

'It might seem impossible under ordinary circumstances; but at such a time as this one must forget one's prejudices,' said Frank. 'Besides, no one can say anything against her. You say yourself that she is good and charitable. I believe that she can also be a firm friend. Do you suppose I should ask you to go to her if I could not trust her?'

'But how should I get there?'

'Leave that to me. Only do as I ask you.'

'But it is such a dreadful thing. What will my grandmother say! What will every one think of me! Indeed, Frank, I do not think I can do anything so wicked.'

'There is nothing wicked in it,' said Frank confidently. 'Your grandmother will of course forgive you. I am only sorry, my very dear Marie, to ask you to do anything so unpleasant. But you must see yourself that it is the only alternative. We must do this, or lose each other for ever. You have our two lives in your hands. Will you join them together, as your heart tells you, or part them and sacrifice them both? You have to decide. In any case I shall go away to-morrow. I would not stay to throw a shadow on your meeting with M. de Rochemar.'

'Ah, what shall I do?' sighed Marie.

Never had she known or even imagined such perplexity as this which was dragging her in two directions. Frank had done his best to uproot all the ideas in which she had been educated, and at the same time had made himself almost necessary to her, so that in these last few days, since his words had put a barrier between them, she had known her first real unhappiness. It was not very surprising. People with

twice as much knowledge of the world as this little Frenchwoman had pronounced him charming, even when he made none of those special efforts to please them that all this time had been heaped on her. The other prospect had lost all its attractions, though she now began to feel sorry for that poor Louis who had given her the *bonbonnière*, and for so many years had hoped to make her his wife some day. But Frank had set before her among other things that, whatever the world might say, she could not do M. de Rochemar a greater wrong than to marry him when she cared for some one else. That must be misery both for him and her, Frank said, and certainly he seemed to be right. As for breaking off the engagement, that would never be heard of. So that this plan of Frank's, wild and horrible as it seemed, was perhaps the only way of escape. M. de Rochemar would be thankful some day, when he got over his first indignation. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire would no doubt forgive; she adored her granddaughter, and was very fond of Frank. And after all there was something strange and delightful in disposing of one's future for oneself, in making an English marriage in spite of everybody; and of course there was no one to compare with Frank. O, dear! the weary struggle must end—these tiresome fears and doubts must be pushed out of sight. What seemed wrong was often right, if one only had the courage to believe it.

And so, walking up and down in the quiet avenue, with arguments and persuasions, of which few people had a better store in reserve than Frank Wyatt, Marie at last consented to go against her former life and all the world around her; to give up all her

friends for the sake of this English lover.

The fairy tales are always repeating themselves in real life. Not all the bolts and bars and walls of brass can keep the princess in.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MADAME DE VALMONT.

MME. DE VALMONT set out from Lauron that afternoon to pay a visit to Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. As her carriage reached the foot of the last hill, and was turning into the avenue, she saw a carriage standing on the road a little farther on towards Sonnay, and a gaily-dressed woman leaning out of it, talking to Mr. Frank Wyatt, who stood in his light-gray clothes with his hand on the door, looking down towards the village. Both these people looked round at the noise of Mme. de Valmont's wheels. Frank took off his hat, and the lady stared. Mme. de Valmont immediately recognised her as the generally disapproved-of Mme. d'Yves.

A little way up the avenue, Marie de Saint-Hilaire was walking slowly towards the house, with drooped head and clasped hands.

She looked up as the carriage passed, and Mme. de Valmont stopped it and opened the door.

'Bon jour, ma chère Marie,' said she. 'Shall I find madame your grandmother at home?'

'She is in the vineyard,' said Marie. 'The vintage has begun to-day; but I will send somebody to call her, madame, if you will go on to the house.'

'Get into the carriage, I beg,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'I am alone to-day. Cécile is very busy finishing a drawing for her father. I came to tell you that we ex-

pect them back to-morrow evening—that is to say, your cousin and M. de Valmont. Max is staying at the Château de Pontmercy. Ma petite, you look very ill. What is the matter with you ?

Marie had got into the carriage, and the Marquise kindly took her hand as she sat beside her.

‘Nothing at all, madame, thank you,’ said Marie. ‘I am quite well.’

‘Cécile and I have not thought you looking well for some time past. However, I hope something will happen soon to brighten you up. I was at Rochemar yesterday, and heard the good news.’

‘We heard this morning,’ said Marie.

She spoke very gently, but Mme. de Valmont was quite aware that she avoided her eyes. She did not take any notice of this, but went on talking with a pleasant smile.

‘Dear Mme. de Rochemar must be very happy. She is truly attached to her son, and I am sure he deserves it.’

‘No doubt he does,’ said Marie.

The cold answer made her friend more and more uneasy. Was there anything really serious to justify her own and Cécile’s doubts? Was it possible that Marie, well brought up as she had been, could forget herself so far? What a misfortune! Mme. de Valmont was silent for a moment or two, occupied with these unpleasant thoughts.

The carriage stopped at the front of the house.

‘I will send for my grandmother,’ said Marie, as she helped Mme. de Valmont out.

‘No, indeed, my dear. She shall not trouble herself to come and see me. You shall take me

to her in the vineyard—if you can walk so far.’

‘Yes, I can walk very well now.’

‘I hope your cousins are well,’ said Mme. de Valmont. ‘By the bye, as I turned into the avenue just now I saw M. Frank in the road, talking to that very strange person, Mme. d’Yves.’

Marie, as she walked by the Marquise’s side through the yards, would very gladly have turned the conversation and avoided these subjects altogether; but her old sprightliness and spirit seemed to have left her, her brain felt deadened, and she could only take refuge in giving the barest answers possible.

‘Yes,’ she said. ‘I saw her carriage stop.’

‘I thought your grandmother was not acquainted with her.’

‘She is not,’ said Marie. ‘Frank has made some sketches of the château; and one day she showed him her curiosities.’

‘But you have not been there! You do not know her?’

‘I have never been there. I have spoken to her twice, by accident. And you, madame?’

‘I remember meeting her some time ago at Rochemar, before they found out that she and her husband were impossible,’ said Mme. de Valmont, laughing a little.

‘But nobody has anything to say against her,’ said Marie.

‘My dear child, what odd things you say! A very vulgar bourgeoisie, without too much education or principle. Is not that enough to satisfy you? Surely you have no wish for her acquaintance? Your cousin may admire her house, but certainly not herself. And every one knows that M. le Baron, as they call him, is quite good for nothing.’

‘She may be vulgar, and she

may be without education,' said Marie, 'but, madame, she is really a good woman. Her charity to the poor is immense. She gives away thousands of francs every year.'

'So much the better for the poor,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'But there are sins that charity does not cover, and it cannot by itself establish a person in society. However, poor Mme. d'Yves, she must be pretty well used to her position by this time, and if she found it unbearable, I suppose she would not remain at Carillon. It is very kind of your cousin to make himself agreeable to her. I wonder he has not overtaken us, for he saw me turn into the avenue.'

'Yes,' said Marie; and she looked back from the upper gate of the yard, where they were standing under the great walnut-trees. It was a relief just then that Frank was not in sight.

Mme. de Valmont, though she talked on without ceasing, instantly going off from the châtelaïne of Carillon to some other subject, was troubled by an instinct of danger. All was not right with Marie, she felt sure. She had known the girl all her life, and she felt strongly inclined to turn upon her, and insist strongly and kindly on hearing the truth; to treat her, in fact, as if she was her own daughter. With some girls she would have done this without a moment's hesitation; but Marie was odd: quick-tempered, proud, and sensitive, and likely to resent very bitterly any attempt at interference. Mme. de Valmont feared that any leading questions, or even a word of kind advice, such as might well come from an old friend, would do more harm than good in this case. She suspected Frank, and yet her suspicions were vague; indeed they were not

likely to go near the truth. She thought that M. de Rochemar's return was the best thing that could happen for everybody. This foolish little girl, if she had any wandering fancies, would be obliged to give them up, and return to her duty. And after all, whatever her discontents might be, a girl so well brought up could never carry them into action. An idea had floated through Mme. de Valmont's mind of warning the Comtesse; but she dismissed that also: it would be officious, and would make Marie even more angry than a remonstrance addressed to herself.

'It all depends on M. de Rochemar,' she thought. 'And Marie is certainly too good to give her friends any real trouble. The English cousin is the one that I mistrust.'

'You are very happy, Marie,' she said, as they turned into the vineyard. 'No one was ever received into a family with more joy than you will be. You have gained the strongest affection from that dear Mme. de Rochemar. When she was speaking of you to me yesterday afternoon, I found myself wishing that Cécile might be equally fortunate.'

'Ah!' sighed Marie.

Mme. de Valmont looked round in terror at the sound, as one does when the worst forebodings are suddenly proved true.

'Madame, for heaven's sake, do not look at me like that!' said Marie, in such hurried passionate tones that the Marquise could hardly believe her ears. 'I wish, with all my heart, that Cécile had my good fortune, as you call it.'

'Dear child, what do you mean?' said Mme. de Valmont, standing still, and gazing with kind eyes at the girl's troubled

face. 'Marie, speak to me as if I was your mother.'

'What did I say? I meant nothing,' said Marie hastily. 'Only Mme. de Rochemar is so much too good to me. Ah, madame,' she went on after a moment, 'I hope you will let Cécile choose for herself. Let her be quite sure—' she turned half away, with a little gesture of wringing her hands. 'Dear madame, you are very kind. You must forget what I have said.'

'Do you think I can forget it?' said Mme. de Valmont.

'Well, then, you must tell it to no one. You will not say a word to my grandmother?'

'I suppose it would be no use,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'But, ma chérie, this is a sad state of mind of yours. I should have said that I never knew a young woman with a better prospect of happiness.'

'Yes,' said Marie, 'I am very wicked. But do not say anything more.'

'I wonder whose fault this is!' exclaimed Mme. de Valmont.

'It is mine.'

'Entirely yours? I do not believe that—'

But Mme. de Valmont was suddenly obliged to break off, for Mme. de Saint-Hilaire had seen her visitor in the distance, and was approaching down one of the vine-rows.

Marie lingered a few minutes with the two ladies as they talked, slowly mounting the slope. She looked up with her eager eyes to Mme. de Valmont, and the look said very plainly, 'I have given you my confidence; you must not betray me to my grandmother. It is too late; it can do no good.' And Mme. de Valmont could do nothing but sadly assent.

Marie walked on and joined

Agnes, who was tired by this time of her vintage work, and was coming to meet her along the cart-road.

'You are come out at last,' she said. 'I have been enjoying myself so much among all these nice picturesque people.'

'I am glad you like it,' said Marie. 'Mme. de Valmont has brought some news that will please you. Johnny is coming back to Lauron to-morrow evening.'

'O, I am delighted to hear that. Look at the sun coming over the woods. I thought we should have a glimpse of him before we had done.'

The two young women stood and silently watched the gradual brightening of the landscape, as the golden sunset light broke out from under the clouds. They seemed to break away suddenly, and all the west was gold and blue. The wooded valley beneath was bathed in a dream-like glory. The vines shone out in brilliant emerald-green; the figures of the vendangeurs stood out clear against their glowing background. It was all like an old Italian picture. The peaceful glory shone on the faces of the tired people, and seemed to transfigure them.

Little Marie de Saint-Hilaire stood with her hands folded, and an unusual flush on her pale cheeks, a sad, plaintive, distraught look about her dark eyes and tight-shut lips.

'I remember the last vintage,' she said, speaking so suddenly that Agnes started from one of her Arcadian dreams. 'I wonder if I shall ever see another.'

CHAPTER XIX.

A RUINED CASTLE.

It seemed to Johnny like a real home-coming, when he drove up in the dusk of that evening, sitting beside M. de Valmont in his favourite dog-cart, with the high-stepping English horse. The leaves rustled in the chestnut-avenue, dogs were barking away in the yards—solemn old Lauron was alive with voices and lights.

'Voilà ces dames qui nous attendent,' said M. de Valmont. 'Well, we have had a pleasant time of it in Brittany, and you must believe, *mon cher*, that my pleasure has been doubled by having you with me. I like the English, and I am happy to have made friends with a very good specimen of that nation.'

'You are too good, *monsieur*,' said Johnny. 'I don't know how to be grateful enough for all the kindness you have shown me.'

'Bah! the gratitude should be on the other side,' said the Marquis.

Two white figures were waiting at the foot of the steps, and the travellers were most cordially welcomed home. They went slowly up the steps into the house, the elders first, talking as fast as possible, and Johnny and Cécile following more silently.

He felt as if it was the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to find himself actually near Cécile again. How she had reigned in his thoughts all through the time of absence! How every day as it passed, whatever might be its own amusements and attractions, had been only valuable because it brought the return a little nearer! Had Cécile herself any idea of this? did she care to see him again? Ah, if he dared only ask her, perhaps—he was

almost certain of it—her eyes would smile him an answer not to be mistaken. But that was not to be thought of.

'Better look the truth in the face,' Johnny told himself. 'This is the last happy day you will ever have at Lauron, old fellow. The faster the time goes, the sooner it will be all over with you.'

That evening at dinner he fell into several fits of silence and absence, lost a great deal of his hosts' agreeable conversation, and made one or two frightfully random answers when they addressed him. He was definitely roused when Cécile spoke to him suddenly across the table.

'And what do you think of our French ships?' she said.

A most innocent little question, asked with her usual frank sweetness. But as Johnny's eyes met hers, their absent sleepiness flashed suddenly into an expressive animation which made Cécile look away after an instant, and brought a faint pink flush over her clear skin.

M. de Valmont was helping himself at the moment, and saw nothing; but his wife glanced from one to the other with a sudden shock of anxiety. Surely it could not be possible that her friend Johnny had deceived her—that there was some secret understanding between him and Cécile! These English were terrible people. But no; she could not distrust Cécile. It was very likely that a weak self-willed little thing like Marie de Saint-Hilaire might be drawn into something wrong and foolish of this kind; but Cécile—impossible! To be sure it was likely enough that Johnny admired her. After all, it was a good thing that he was going away soon, and that if he ever came back again, it would

most likely be after Cécile was married to a suitable person, and everything comfortably and reasonably settled.

In the salon that evening they were talking a little of M. de Rochemar's return, but presently M. de Valmont called Cécile away to the library to find some book for him, and the Marquise and Johnny were left alone together. It was a chilly evening, early in October, and a wood fire was burning behind the great old-fashioned dogs. Mme. de Valmont was sitting in the shade of the stately mantelpiece, which went up from floor to ceiling, carved, painted, and gilded, with the arms of all the branches of the family blazoned on its projecting front. A shaded lamp on a table in the background seemed to flicker and glimmer with the firelight on the bright floor, the tall ghostly figures that almost moved on the walls, the heavy curtains, the unoccupied fauteuils that stood about the room, and Johnny's hair as he sat in front of the fire, and stooped to caress Cécile's rescued pug, which lay basking in the warmth at his feet.

Mme. de Valmont did not show Johnny by any word or sign that her feeling towards him had changed a little. In fact, she told herself with great justice that she had only herself to blame. An English mother would, no doubt, have been more prudent. But in France young people were not supposed to fall in love with each other in this spontaneous way. Such things only happened when they had been arranged and sanctioned beforehand by the respective relations.

Mme. de Valmont listened to the history Johnny was telling her of his brother Frank's new prospects.

'You see, my uncle must leave it all to him,' said Johnny. 'There is no one else.'

'You, for instance,' said Mme. de Valmont, gently waving her fan.

'Me?' and Johnny laughed. 'O, he would never think of me. He knows much more of Frank. I am afraid I have no chance of ever being left anything. And as to myself, I don't much care. One has money to spend on shore, and then one goes to sea again. And I should never know how to spend a large fortune. Frank would.'

'I can believe that,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'What will he do? Marry, I suppose—travel about, buy a great many pictures.'

'The last two,' said Johnny; 'I don't know about the first. He has had a disappointment, and I don't suppose he will get over it for some time.'

'Indeed! Poor M. Frank!' said Mme. de Valmont.

'Yes,' said Johnny deliberately, looking into the fire. 'But I ought not to say anything about it. Things that are hopeless are best left alone altogether. Do you not think so, madame?'

'Certainly. I guess what you mean, however. I can understand that you are sorry for your brother, but I think it is a great pity that people should indulge themselves in such fancies at all. Yes, indeed,' said Mme. de Valmont, bending suddenly forward, and tapping Johnny on the arm with her long black fan, 'it is my opinion that people should never dream of marrying out of their own country. I think I have said the same to you before. Do not you agree with me?'

'No, I don't. I beg your pardon—but if people care for each other, I cannot see that country makes any difference.'

'Ah, but indeed you are mistaken. When two people come to live together, after being brought up with different ideas on every possible subject, it must be very sad for them both. How can they understand each other? Both may be very good, and wish to do all that is right, but they will differ even in their ideas of right and wrong. All the love in the world, *mon cher Johnny*, and all the good intentions, could not make two such lives run smoothly together.'

Johnny bent his head rather lower, and went on stroking the little dog at his feet. *Mme. de Valmont* was half angry with herself for the liking she could not help feeling for this troublesome young Englishman. She smiled as she looked at him, and for a few moments they were both quite silent. Johnny at last raised his head slowly, and met her eyes. One would have thought that it must be a hopeful fate which lay in the hands of any one so fair, so pleasant and happy-looking.

'You know,' Johnny began suddenly, 'we shall be going back very soon now. I can't go away without asking you something, *madame*. It seems a bad sort of return for all your kindness—and I don't exactly mean to ask, so much as to tell you. You will be very much surprised, but I hope you won't be angry.'

'Are you sure that I do not know already?'

'It is impossible, unless—if *Mlle. Cécile* told you those few words, I can only beg your pardon for saying them. I never have said and I never would say anything more to her without your leave. I am willing to be quite French as far as that goes.' Johnny paused, for *Mme. de Valmont's* face had changed visibly. But she controlled her-

self, and spoke with her usual calmness.

'I must interrupt you for a moment. I have heard nothing. Will you have the goodness to tell me what you said?'

'To be sure,' said Johnny eagerly; 'it was nothing that she could have told you. I daresay she forgot it directly. It was just after I went into the river for her dog. She said I might have been drowned, and I said perhaps it would have been the best thing for me. And I asked her if she did not know why. And then she asked me to say nothing more; and indeed, *madame*, I did not, except "if you were English," or something of that kind. You see there was nothing for her to tell you. Only I thought she must have mentioned it, because you seemed to have some notion.'

'*Mon ami*,' said *Mme. de Valmont*, smiling very kindly, 'forgive me if I tell you that you are not clever in hiding your feelings. Did you really imagine that *Cécile's* mother could not see that you admired *Cécile*? But do you see?—one does not trouble oneself much about manifest impossibilities.'

People sometimes do not know that they had any hope till it is taken away from them. And the cup of disappointment does not really lose any of its bitterness when it is offered to our lips by a kind and gentle hand.

'No, *madame*,' said Johnny, after a moment, with a strange shining in his eyes. 'But, at least, you are sorry for me? Because, you know, she is—and I could not believe it was impossible till I had asked you.'

'I am sorry for you indeed, *mon ami*,' said *Mme. de Valmont*. 'But I really wonder at your allowing yourself to think of it at all.'

'So do I. But Englishmen are

great fools in that way. We never know when we are beaten. I think I feel pretty conscious of it now, though.'

Johnny sighed, pushed back his chair, and got up. Mme. de Valmont rose at the same moment, and laid her hand on his arm.

'Listen to me for a moment,' she said. 'This seems a strange way of showing gratitude to the person who saved our lives, and who, whatever he may now think of us, will never lose his place among our most valued friends. But the duty to one's children must come first. Should I be doing my duty by Cécile if I gave her to you? Be reasonable and generous. But I am sure you are both; and because I cannot grant your wish you will not turn away from the place you now hold, dear Johnny, next to our sons in our affection.'

'Thank you, madame,' said the soft-hearted sailor; and once more he took and kissed the pretty white hand, which had so quietly and easily tumbled his castle into hopeless ruins.

Cécile and her father came back, and the rest of the evening passed quickly away. Johnny played a game of tric-trac with the Marquis. Mme. de Valmont and Cécile worked and talked, and at last they wished each other good-night. A very peaceful evening, though Mme. de Valmont, for one, was glad it was over. She kissed Cécile even more affectionately than usual, and gave her hand to Johnny with a smiling 'A demain.'

Johnny went to bed, thinking himself the most miserable fellow in the universe, and quite ready to change places with anybody. He did not find out till the next morning that there were two people, rich and prosperous, with a thousand chances in the world to his one, who made him thankful

for his own melancholy lot. For at least he had a good conscience, and a lady-love worthy of his devotion, though the one might be anything but a paying concern, and the other far out of his reach.

When the valet-de-chambre brought him his coffee in the morning, there was a note lying on the tray.

'When did this come?' said Johnny, seeing Agnes's handwriting.

'This morning, monsieur. A woman brought it from Les Sapinières.'

Johnny read the note, and then dressed himself as fast as possible, and went down-stairs to wait for a glimpse of Mme. de Valmont. His first impulse was to show it to her and ask her advice, for he was himself so thunderstruck that he did not know what to say or think. Agnes had scribbled it off in a great hurry; it was blotted and blurred, but the contents were plain enough:

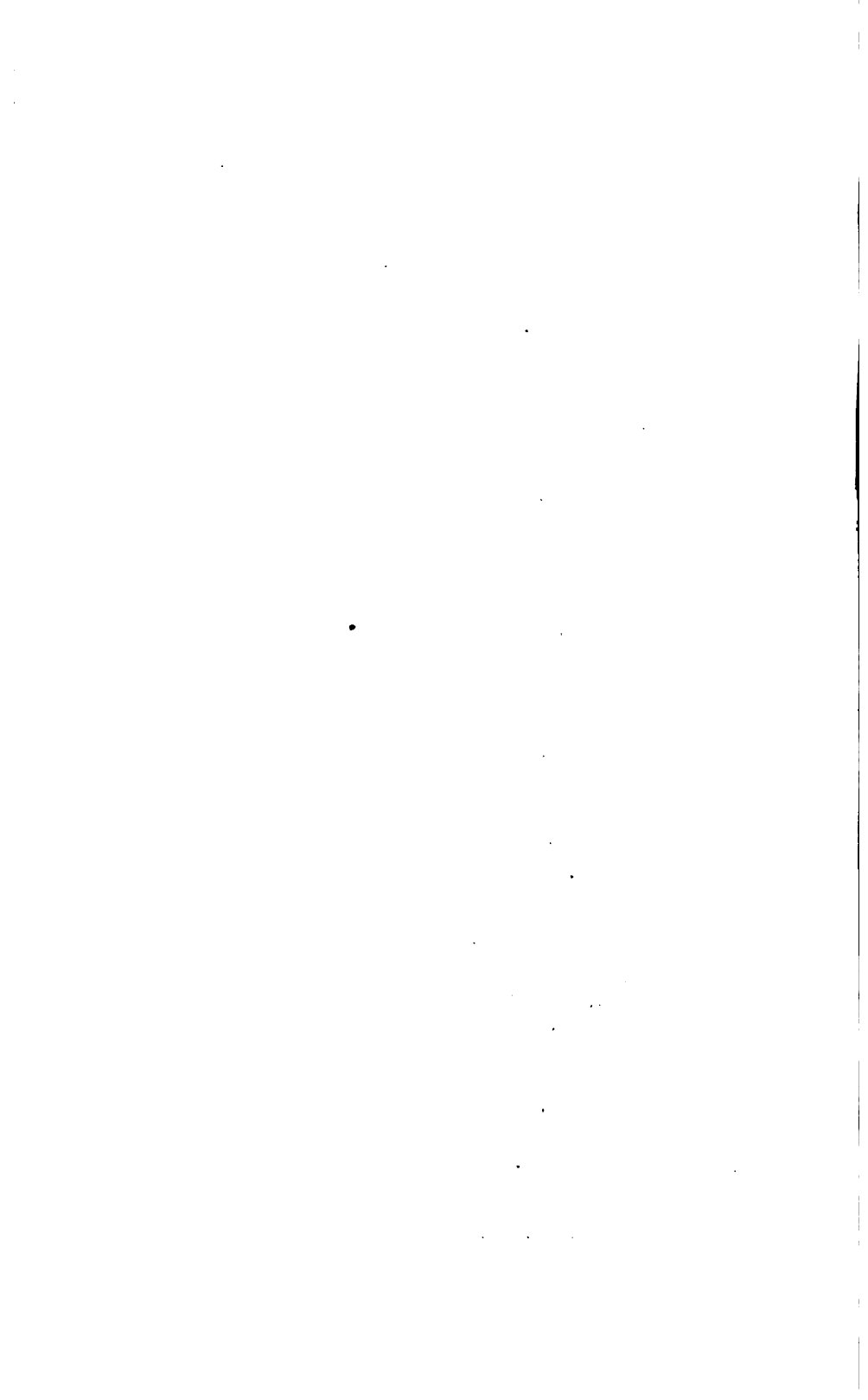
'Les Sapinières, 10 P.M.

'My dear Johnny,—A most terrible thing has happened. My aunt was very busy to-day, and dinner was put off till half-past six. When that time came, neither Frank nor Marie was to be found. They had both disappeared, and no one knew anything about them. Inquiries were made, and half an hour ago the shepherdess came and said that she had met them in the old avenue about half-past five. We do not know what to do. Auguste is gone to Carillon, to ask at the station. You will have this early in the morning; and do come to us as soon as you possibly can. I am so miserable.

'Ever your affectionate

'A. WYATT.'





CHAPTER XX.

VIOLETS.

'Ah, what a misfortune!' said Mme. de Valmont, nodding her head over the note. 'La pauvre petite! I knew something was wrong, but this is indeed terrible. We must not stay to talk about it, but do our best at once. Mon ami,' to her husband, 'pray order the carriage. You and I must go with M. Johnny to Les Sapi nières.'

'But what is to be done?' said M. de Valmont.

'We shall see: I have an idea. But, in heaven's name, do not let us talk about it. It is too sad. That poor Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, what will she do!'

The Marquise went away to prepare for her drive. M. de Valmont also disappeared; and Johnny found himself left alone in the pretty salle with all the pictures hanging round. He sat down by a table, and buried his face in his arms.

Presently Cécile came in at another door, paused a moment at the sight of him, and moved on again with a gentle rustle across the floor. She looked hard, as she passed him, at Johnny in his depressed attitude: it spoke his feeling very plainly, that Frank by this action had disgraced every one belonging to him, and most of all his brother. Cécile's kind heart ached for him. She crossed the hall slowly, lingered at the opposite door, and finally came back and stood by the table.

'Monsieur,' she said, in a low voice; but Johnny's face was still hidden.

'Do not be so sad,' said Cécile very gently; 'this is no fault of yours.'

Johnny raised his face an inch, but without looking.

'Mademoiselle, his relations must share his disgrace. At any rate we can never show our faces in this country again.'

'Ah, si—' began Cécile faintly.

'My brother and I have made a fine mess of it between us,' said Johnny; 'and all we can hope is that our friends here will forget us as soon as possible.'

'Then you must be disappointed. We never forget. We De Valmonts are celebrated for our good memory.'

'I know,' said Johnny—'I knew what you were when I met you coming into that church. I am a very bad hand at forgetting too. These weeks have been the happiest and the wretchedest time in all my life. It does not do to stay among the angels too long, for it makes one discontented. But, anyhow, it is over now. There's the carriage; and I have only to wish you good-bye, mademoiselle. I shall never see you again.'

Johnny had got up by this time, and was staring at a bunch of autumn violets which Cécile had gathered that morning, and was holding loosely in her left hand.

'Will you have them?' she said, holding them suddenly out to him. But Johnny did not take them. He looked at her for the first time, and saw that her cheeks were pale and her eyes still heavy with tears, which no doubt had been falling for her poor friend Marie.

'Pardon, mademoiselle,' he said, bowing gravely; 'they will be happier with you.'

Mlle. de Valmont blushed vividly enough then. Her eyes seemed to dry up suddenly, and to flash a glance of momentary contempt on poor Johnny.

'Adieu, monsieur,' she said, with an air which no marquise could have excelled, and making him an astounding curtsy.

'Adieu, mademoiselle,' said Johnny, bowing very low.

She had turned away and was gone, while he stood still in the same place, and heard as if in a dream Mme. de Valmont talking on her way down-stairs. What concerned him more was the sight of the unfortunate violets, thrown in a little heap on the first chair Cécile had passed in her exit. His presence of mind returning, he went forward quickly, knelt on one knee, and kissed them. Then he took up one in his fingers and looked at it.

'Yes, there is no harm in taking it. She will never know.'

So he drove away from Lauron with M. and Mme. de Valmont. It looked like an enchanted castle, shining in the morning sun, with its great background of dark-green forest, just beginning to be varied with red and brown. After all, Johnny thought, it was not a good thing to make oneself too happy with these imprisoned princesses. It must come to a bad end some day, in one way or another. Was it possible that when Frank talked jokingly of running away he had any formed idea in his head of what he had now done? Better give up a thousand loves, Johnny told himself, than behave like a rascal, and make such a return as this for hospitality.

The Marquis and Marquise talked a good deal on their way to Les Sapinières, but Johnny did not join in much. One miserable thought after another came to occupy his mind. He did not wake to outer things till the coachman drew up suddenly at the turn into the avenue, in obedience to the energetic beckonings of M. le Curé de Sonnay, who was walking up the road with two or three peasants straggling behind him.

'Madame,' said the Curé, arriving breathless at the carriage-door, 'you are going to the château?'

'Mais oui, M. le Curé.'

'Mme. la Comtesse is not there. I have just met her driving off with mademoiselle sa nièce to Rochemar, to carry the sad news.'

'Ah, mon Dieu! And you have heard nothing more? No trace has been found?'

The Curé sighed and shrugged his shoulders.

'We are all in confusion. Auguste could not discover at the station that any one who could possibly be mademoiselle had left by train last night. They say that an English gentleman did leave, which makes it even more mysterious; for if M. Wyatt is gone away by himself, where are we to look for mademoiselle?'

'And they were seen walking away together from the château!' said M. de Valmont.

'Oui, monsieur. Where are you, Mère Chapin? Mme. la Comtesse has forgiven you, so we must not say much, but certainly it was your fault that they had time to escape.'

'Ah, dame,' said the little shepherdess, with a gesture of despair, when the Curé turned to her, looking as severe as his natural benevolence would allow, 'M. le Curé says it was my fault. And how could I know? How could I tell that the English gentleman meant any harm, walking straight down the road with mademoiselle sa cousine?'

'Go on,' said the Curé sternly. 'You know that ought to have shown you that all was not right.'

'Mademoiselle was crying as she walked,' said La Chapin, looking up at Mme. de Valmont, and nodding her old head violently. 'She did not look at me, but ce

monsieur came up to me and said a few words.'

'What did he say?' said Mme. de Valmont impatiently.

'I am going to tell Mme. la Marquise. He said, "Allons, Mère Chapin, you are going straight home, n'est-ce pas? You are not going to the château, to tell the people there that you have met me walking in the avenue?" "Mais non, monsieur," said I; "who would have thought of it! Is it my affair if monsieur and mademoiselle choose to walk out in the dusk?" "Not at all," said he; "and so you are going to forget all about it. Here is a little present for you." And he gave me a twenty-franc piece.'

'Méchant!' muttered the Curé.

'And that did not make you suspect something wrong, ma bonne femme?' said M. de Valmont.

'Dame, I don't know, M. le Marquis. It was not the first money that the gentleman had given me. He is very good to the poor. I only thought that I had a piece of very good fortune, till they came and waked me up from my bed to say that mademoiselle was gone.'

'But how did she go?' exclaimed Mme. de Valmont. 'She could not walk to Carillon. Was any carriage seen about the place, do you know, M. le Curé?'

'Madame, the only carriage that passed through the village yesterday evening was that of Mme. la Baronne d'Yves. I saw it myself as I came from the church; she was in it herself. She stopped at the house of the poor woman Robert, to whom she has been very charitable. Her goodness to the poor is a marvel.'

'Indeed,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'Well, we will not follow Mme. de Saint-Hilaire to Roche-mar, and there is no use in going

to Les Sapinières. We will go to Carillon. You will come with us, M. Johnny?'

'Certainly, madame.'

'Morin, drive to Carillon. Adieu, M. le Curé.'

The priest lifted his broad hat, and then stood with a sad face, looking after the receding carriage. He had a very sincere affection for the little demoiselle, who had always been so dutiful to him and so good to his people. The change in her lately had not escaped him, and he had been looking forward with anxiety to the departure of these English cousins, who could teach her nothing good. But the real result of their influence was much more dreadful than any of his vague dreams. Certainly, it was not much that earthly care could do to keep a wandering soul in the right way. The old man murmured a Pater and an Ave as he stood still on the road.

While the carriage rolled swiftly on its way towards Carillon, Mme. de Valmont told her two companions what reasons she had for a faint suspicion that Mme. d'Yves might somehow be concerned in Marie's flight.

'Your brother is acquainted with her,' she said to Johnny, 'and as I drove to Les Sapinières on Monday, I saw him talking to her in the road. Then I overtook that poor child in the avenue. She seemed altogether in a strange humour, and talked among other things of the charity and goodness of this Mme. d'Yves. If I had dreamed of this—ah, how I wish I had talked more to her, and discovered all!'

'Do not trouble yourself with regrets,' said her husband. 'We may yet be in time to do some good. I agree with you—this Mme. d'Yves is a woman without scruples, and would certainly be ready to help in anything of

this kind. Still I should like to discover her motive.'

'That is easy enough,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'She would do anything for revenge on Mme. de Rochemar. If it had not been for her, she might probably have established herself in society. Do you see?'

'Is it not wonderful how these ladies understand each other?' said M. de Valmont to Johnny, lifting his shoulders and eyebrows in astonishment.

His wife laughed. 'This is no time for joking, mon ami,' she said. 'The least I mean to do at Carillon is to discover what Mme. d'Yves knows of Marie.'

'If Frank went off by train last night, and left her behind, she herself may be with Mme. d'Yves,' said Johnny.

'So much the better. I shall find that out, and not leave Carillon without seeing her,' said the Marquise decidedly.

Morin pulled up at the entrance of the town, and looked round for orders.

'To the château,' said M. de Valmont.

It was a wonderful thing to see one of the best known carriages in the neighbourhood going full tilt through the narrow lanes that led to the river, and on down the poplar avenue to the front of the old château. People came out to stare. The washerwomen, ever busy in their little creek, stopped their work, and stood up with wet shining arms, quite forgetful of their good manners, and incapable for the moment of anything but a prolonged gaze. The place itself was perfectly silent; the flowers bloomed against the rough old walls; the towers trembled on the broad rippling stream. The carriage stopped in front of the great gates, which were tight

shut, as well as the little postern-door beside them. M. de Valmont got out and pulled the bell that hung beside this door. It rang and resounded all through the place. Then there was silence again. They might have arrived at an uninhabited castle, or at least an enchanted one. Mme. de Valmont sat looking at the gates, as if she expected them to open of themselves, and Johnny, who felt as if all this was a horrid dream, stared mechanically at the card she held in her hand, 'Mise. de Valmont.' He read the letters backwards and forwards five or six times. Then the Marquis came back to the carriage-door.

'We might as well have inquired at the station on our way,' he said. 'The whole family may have started for Paris this morning.'

'I do not think so. I believe they are here,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'You had better ring again. Wait—we will get out, so that there may be no unnecessary delay.'

Again the bell pealed, louder and longer than before. The door was suddenly opened by a footman, who looked rather incongruous, standing in that twelfth century postern. Mme. de Valmont walked forward so decidedly that he was obliged to fall back, and allow her to pass into the little dark courtyard under the old gateway.

'Mme. d'Yves is at home,' said she. 'Take these cards to her, and tell her that the Marquise de Valmont begs the favour of a few minutes' talk.'

The man bowed. 'Par ici, madame,' he said, and led the way up the corner staircase to the salon.

'We will stay here, mon cher,' said the Marquis to Johnny. 'Mme. de Valmont will manage that lady better by herself.'

(To be continued.)

SOME YORKSHIRE CRICKET STORIES.

'THE game isn't what it was, sir,' said an old professional to me not long ago, as we were watching together a cricket-match at the Oval. 'The game isn't what it was.'

Now while I am not prepared to maintain that the motto, 'Sumus ubi fuimus'—that of the Weare family, its English, 'We are where we were'—would be, if universally, advantageously applied, I am not sorry to believe that, with regard to one part of the country at least, my companion's words as to cricket are true, and that the game is not now, in some respects, what it was twenty years ago.

The ability to present in a new light a well-worn subject is a gift much to be envied, and possessed by few: among these few the well-known M.P., who lately discovered the source of the Fugitive Slave Circular in the philanthropy of a promoter laudably unwilling that slaves be allowed to delude themselves with the belief that they can save their lives by boarding ironclads so sure to sink as ours. Among them also a young barrister friend of mine, who, being called upon by the judge at five minutes' notice to defend a prisoner accused of being in unlawful possession of a basket of fish, presented certain stubborn facts in so fresh an aspect to the jury that his client was acquitted; my friend receiving for his fee next morning while in the High-street a tap on the shoulder and, with a respectful salute, the following, 'Sir, I

am obligated much to you. You are a wonderful gentleman, sir. I do assure you, sir, when you was a-talking to the twelve gents yesterday, I fairly didn't know whether I had taken them fish or not.'

But to this ability I can lay no claim: my tales are plain, unvarnished, and true, and are told exactly as they occurred.

My early cricket experience was cast in those favoured localities where, *teste Mr. Punch*, the head of a stranger develops a magnetic attraction for the moiety of a brick, the bull-pup appropriates the baby's milk, and the necessity of 'getting foughten' with all possible despatch is on high days and holidays universally acknowledged—the mining districts of Yorkshire. It was with the hope of providing a healthy substitute for the last-named and similar diversions that my brothers and myself used what influence we possessed towards the formation and encouragement of cricket clubs in the populous villages of our neighbourhood.

Every unprejudiced person is aware that when a Yorkshireman takes up a new idea he goes in for it heartily; and so it was after a short time with our cricket. When water boils some is sure to boil over; but in our case the difficulty was to prevent the boiling over of the whole, so strong became the *esprit de corps* and the rivalry of the various clubs.

The idea of an umpire being anything but a strong partisan

of the eleven from whose village he came was sure to be received with the contempt which it deserved. Nevertheless did we contrive to possess in such an official one whose reputation for impartiality and upright dealing was allowed by all to be beyond dispute.

His name was Jem, and he was built upon the principle of the Irishman's wall, which, as every one knows, being three feet high and four feet thick, became, when the wind blew it over, 'higher than it was at first.'

'Jem,' said I one day to him, 'how is it that whenever we have to go to a match without you there is always some trouble between the umpires? Every one says you are the only fair man about here.'

Jem looked solemnly round, as though a great secret were on his mind, and in a low impressive voice disburdened himself.

'Mister Arthur,' said he, 'it's this way. I'm all for fairration, I am. I wait till I see t'other chap begin; then what I sees to is this—I *has the next trick*.'

Give and take, you will observe, live and let live—statesmanlike principles, now so highly extolled—guided his every action. His manly and consistent character commanded our admiration to the end.

Saturday was our match-day, for many of our eleven were hard at work below ground or above on other days of the week. There was no lack of challenges: we had more than we could take up. They were intelligibly, if not always grammatically, worded. 'The East Pitley cricketers is willing for a fair game on Saturday se'nnight—say if you'll come.' 'The Bonaparte Young Hopefuls challenges the —. The B.Y.H. bars your Mr. A.' This was one of us, afterwards of his University

and county eleven—a great card even in his schoolboy days; so great that, on one occasion, after our arrival without him on the match-ground, my attention was drawn to a respectably-dressed man gesticulating wildly to a surrounding circle, who hailed me with 'Bain't your Mr. A. a-coming, sir?' and when I answered that he was obliged to be elsewhere, declared the match to be 'a regular sell,' 'for,' said he, 'I have come six-and-forty mile to see him play, and now I'll have to go back again.'

That much-to-be desired faculty of taking rough and smooth alike with equanimity was in our case a necessity. When we reached East Pitley, for instance, we searched in vain for the ground, having declared our unwillingness to believe that our wickets were to be pitched in a field ripe for the hay-harvest. But so it was to be; and a scythe had to be brought before a beginning could be made.

The Bonaparte Young Hopefuls inclined to the other extreme, sending to us on our arrival a deputation to intimate that we should find the ground 'a bit bare;' the which, as Mrs. Gamp says, it was, being a well-rolled composition of coal-refuse and that which in Yorkshire is known as 'dross,' i.e. the residuum of the furnaces when the molten iron has been drawn off.

None the less did we have an exciting game, and I have seen the ball 'bump' much more in a University match at Lord's.

And I have reason to remember another contest, which took place on a *path* running through the middle of a field; for I achieved on that occasion a feat to me unwonted—going in first and 'carrying my bat out,' and with all my bones unbroken.

The great holiday in Yorkshire is Whitsun-Monday, on which day occur, as the local almanacs inform you, a large proportion of the 'tides' of the various townlets. Yorkshiremen speak of a 'tide' where less well-instructed people would say fair or feast. Dowling tide was second only, in the opinion of its inhabitants at least, to Greenwich Fair, abolished some twenty years ago—its epitaph, 'Sic transit gloria Easter mundi'—and the ancient game of 'knur and spell' held its own against cricket on that occasion at Dowling. But Parsley was a less populous place, and thither one Whitsun-Monday, an unusually hot day, we repaired punctually to our time, eleven o'clock, and were met by some of the principal members of the club, overlookers for the most part, as the chief employes in a spinning-mill are called, who informed us that before we could begin to play we had 'got to come to dinner.'

Half-past eleven A.M. was, to say the least of it, a somewhat early dining-hour; but to dinner we went: my brother and myself to one house, the others being distributed in the village at various hospitable abodes.

The first dish proved to be an enormous plum-pudding, of which the host insisted on our eating, or appearing to eat, more than a pound apiece; this was followed by roast beef, after which came apple-pies and cheese.

We did our best; but our entertainers prophesied that we 'should be but small' if we never ate more than that.

It was on this occasion that there arose a slight difficulty, owing to the dissatisfaction felt by a member of the Parsley eleven with a decision given by our immaculate umpire, the before-mentioned James.

'How's that?' cries some one.

'Aat,'* says Jem.

'Whatten ye say?' asks the batsman.

'Ah say aat,' repeats the umpire.

'Then ah shalln't leave t' sticks.'

And leave the 'sticks'—that is, the wickets—he would not; and he was deaf to the commands and entreaties of his captain, until the spectators, losing patience, informed him that they weren't going to have the game stopped; and if he didn't come out, why, he'd be fetched.

We were rich in 'Scripture names' in our club—Manasseh, Job, Levi, Ephraim, Judah, and Matthew, I remember, with two Emmanuels and a Seth. One of these—he is a cricketer still, I hear (and as all were known and addressed by their Christian names, I must not particularise)—prided himself on his power of 'stealing runs;' and he frequently, in the attempted accomplishment of the theft, ran his partner out. But it was never, I need hardly say, his fault—at least in his own estimation. No one, he would say, need ever be run out if he would only keep his eyes open. But once this very fate overtook the man himself, and at a critical point of the game; we had four runs to make, and one more wicket to fall after his. He was fairly out, but took up his position to receive the next ball as though his right to do so could not be questioned. But no ball was delivered, and he appealed to the umpire, who repeated his decision. 'Aat!' whereupon our friend deliberately pulled up the three stumps by his side, put them under his right arm, marched to the opposite end, and repeating the operation proceeded with the six 'sticks' to the boundary fence,

* 'Out.

threw them one by one over it into a field of standing grass, leapt the hedge after them, and lying flat down on his face refused to be comforted.

Our opponents claimed the game, but to this we demurred; the case was not provided for in *Lillywhite's Guide*, nor could any of us call to mind a precedent. This match therefore, sad to say, 'ended in a wrangle.'

The only other match which I can remember as ending in a similar manner gave rise to a question, as to the solution of which even the omniscient sporting papers differed. We had agreed to draw the stumps at seven o'clock; at six-fifty-five we had two runs to get to win, when some one of the opposite side shouted, 'Seven has struck.' Umpires were appealed to; the watch of one said five minutes to, that of the other five minutes past, seven. While we disputed a distant infallible clock sounded the hour. Of course you will say the umpires' watches ought to have been compared at first, and in a state of high civilisation they would have been. But which side had won? We had been done, we argued, out of five minutes, in which we should most likely have obtained our two runs. But, said our opponents, you had not got them by seven o'clock. And I am afraid the question will not be answered much before the settlement of the damages in the well-known story of the cow and the boat.

I wonder if it rains as much as ever in Yorkshire. I am more of a South-countryman now, and an umbrella is by no means a superfluous article in these parts. But such weather as Parsley had for its tide afore mentioned was a thing to be talked of for the rest of the summer. It almost always

rained. Some said it was the long chimneys that did it; but, as a rule, we played 'rain or shine.' Saturday was our 'day out,' and we could not afford to waste it. But the 'field' was sometimes a strange sight. I wonder if a certain member of the present Government remembers, as I remember it, his energetic fielding at long-leg with a large potato sack artistically disposed about his person. And it was not enlivening to sit, as we once did for over four hours, in a tent on a ground two miles from anywhere, hoping in vain for a cessation in a downpour so heavy that even our play was stopped.

An additional reason for our unwillingness to be driven in by the wet was that if the opposing teams got together, with nothing to do but to talk, disputes would arise as to the prowess of the respective champions, which were apt to be settled by appeal to the ordeal of battle. Affection for this said ordeal was a distinguishing characteristic of a township which we will call Sudby; so much so, that when I was once making up an eleven to contend with the Sudbeians, and was balancing the claims of two of our men, about equal in cricketing power, but unequal in physical strength and height, the matter was settled by Jem: 'We'll take Tom' (this was the big man), 'for he'll be most use if it comes to a row.'

Sudby had a bad name—there was no denying it—and I fear that it partly deserved it. Dog-fights certainly were, I do not say they are now, more plentiful on Sunday than on other days in Sudby, and the mysterious game of knur and spell was in full swing during the time of afternoon service; for there was a church there, and more than one chapel; and there was a parson—Parson M. he was

called—who tried to do his duty; but the material was too hard for him to make much impression upon it. Nor did the chapels fare much better than the church. But when Parson M. died every one said he had done what he could, and no doubt he had gone to his reward. Whereupon there appeared in one of the papers of a neighbouring large town a paragraph professing to describe Parson M. applying for admission at the door of which St. Peter held the key.

‘Who are you?’ asks the saint.

‘I am Parson M.’

‘Where do you come from?’

‘I come from Sudby.’

St. Peter has never heard of such a place. Parson M., however, convinces him after much trouble of the existence of Sudby, and is admitted at last; the saint apologising for the delay, because, saith he, ‘*You are the first that has come from there.*’

This I remember brought an indignant reply, assuring the public that there were as good Christians in Sudby as in C.—the town where the paper was published—only they did not make a parade of their religion. Whatever doubt might be entertained as to the truth of the first part of this assertion, the latter part was strictly in accordance with the facts.

I have all but lost sight of my old allies now, but I hear of them occasionally. The stealer of runs is flourishing, and in a fair way, they tell me, to make his fortune; but he still sticks to cricket, his fifty years notwithstanding. ‘We’ve no captain in our club,’ he used to say; ‘we’re all captains.’ But he got his way then, and gets it all the more now; it is a case of ‘Down with the rulers, down with every-thing’;

We’ll all be equal—and I’ll be your king.’

He is great in the chair at the annual dinner, and greater at bulls, rivalling even him of the sister isle, who on taking his place thus addressed a troublesome member of the company: ‘Now, Mr. B., let me hear nothing from you this evening but silence, and not too much of that.’

The little man who used to keep our wickets, and whose temper was, not to put too fine a point upon it, extremely villainous—he was always spoken of as ‘good-tempered Perkins’—has disappeared from the scene. So also has the hen-fancier, a tall thin lachrymose individual, who, being saluted on entering the tent after the decease of a favourite bird with ‘Well, Thomas, how’s t’ owd hen?’ replied, ‘Nay, Richard, that’s shabby; thou knawed it were deead;’ and, pulling out his handkerchief, wept aloud.

The ‘pillar’ of a small chapel, who, on the rare occasions of our allowing the wet to drive us within our canvas, would insist on regaling us with the latest piece of music therein in use, and who would entreat silence while he showed us how ‘This is the place where t’ bass cooms in,’ is still faithful, I am told, to the vocal, but grown too fat for the bodily, exercise.

The last I saw of them all was when, being at home three months after my ordination, I was asked to preach by our old vicar. The club heard of it. There were one or two church-goers among them; but the great majority, however, went, like him of the bass voice, to one or other of the numerous chapels. But as service began on the Sunday morning a long procession of stalwart men, two and two, to the number of thirty, marched into the church and took their seats, and conducted themselves with all due decorum.

I am a middle-aged parson by this time, in the West country, and heartily as I entered into our contests of old, I have grave doubts as to my deriving equal enjoyment from similar scenes now. We do play cricket in these parts, but among the class of our neighbours most nearly answering in position to my friends of the pit and mill we much need more *élan* and energy, and one or two special importations from the North would do our cricket doubt-

less more good than harm. But there would be certain attendant risks: the run-stealer's heart would surely be broken in his first innings; and if the answer received by me from a stout young butcher when asked to join us—viz. 'I don't want to have my legs knocked by that there hard ball'—were to be made to 'good-tempered Perkins,' I could not be answerable for the consequences, or for the preservation of the peace of our sovereign lady the Queen.

FOUR FIGURES.

A Threnody.

O NIGHT, thou art not sweet! Scant rest indeed
Thou giv'st to those who crave Lethæan draughts of thee,
And vain desire remaineth still the need
Of those who in thy arms would e'en as dead men be;
And yet, because we seek thy spell not utterly in vain,
Of thee, O Night, continually unhappy men are fain.

O Day, thou art not glad! Thou bringest care,
And weary hopeless toil, and pleasure wearier still;
Thou pointest out the deeds we may not dare,
The ends which none may reach, the memories none may kill;
And yet, because we fear to tread the dark and lonely way
Of sunless night, which all must tread, we cling to thee, O Day!

O Time, thou art not kind! Thou bringest eld,
Remorse for vanish'd years, and all that might have been,
As in thy glass illusions are dispell'd,
The hollow wraith of hope, and all the sadness seen;
And yet, because we scarcely feel the ruin thou hast wrought,
A further span of thee, O Time, by foolish men is sought.

O Love, thou art not sweet, or glad, or kind!
Thou hauntest Night with wistful dreams; thy tender grace
Makes the Day mournful, while with longings blind
We see Time's ruthless touch conceal and mar thy face;
And yet, because we yearn to know the discipline of pain,
From Day and Night and Time we strive a little Love to gain.

THE PRINCE OF WALES'S INDIAN TOUR.

ORIENTAL scholars, according to the handsome admission of Professor Max Müller, still live by the grace of Sir William Jones, and still draw on the stock of general interest which he excited in the English mind for Eastern subjects. Sir William Jones—distinguished as a gentleman, scholar, historian, lawyer, and politician—became aware, more than a hundred years ago, of the startling similarity between Sanscrit, Latin, Greek, and Celtic; to which group Colebrooke, his great successor, added the German and Slavonic, as being founded in the long-run on the same basis of a far-off Aryan philological unity. Other European scholars brought to light the full wealth of the mine first 'prospected' by Sir William Jones; and as the result of their labours we now know that in language, and all that is implied by language, India and Europe are one.

'The East, formerly a land of dreams, of fables, and fairies, has become to us a land of unmistakable reality; the curtain between the West and the East has been lifted, and our old forgotten home stands before us again in bright colours and definite outlines. Two worlds, separated for thousands of years, have been reunited as by a magical spell, and we feel rich in a past that may well be the pride of our noble Aryan family. We say no longer, vaguely and poetically, *Ex Oriente lux*, but we know that all the most vital elements of our knowledge and civilisation—our languages, our alphabets, our figures,

our weights and measures, our art, our religion, our traditions, our very nursery stories—came to us from the East; and we must confess that but for the rays of Eastern light, whether Aryan, or Semitic, or Hamitic, that called forth the hidden germs of the dark and dreary West, Europe, now the very light of the world, might have remained for ever a barren and forgotten promontory of the primeval Asiatic continent. We live, indeed, in a new world—the barrier between the West and the East, that seemed insurmountable, has vanished. The East is ours, we are its heirs, and claim by right our share in its inheritance.'*

It was owing to the labours of scholars that India first assumed a mysterious and, so to say, ancestral dignity in the eyes of the Western world. When the dominion passed from the Mogul to the hands of Englishmen, the civilisation of the subject race was estimated at a shade better than that of barbarians, and the gulf was wide indeed between the conqueror and the conquered. The discovery of Sanscrit threw a bridge of affection and common origin over the chasm that had separated the two races, and the course of thought and speculation was entirely revolutionised. The position of India in the scale of civilisation came to be distinctly apprehended, and the relations of its people with the advanced na-

* Address delivered before the Aryan Section of the International Congress of Orientalists, in London, September 1874, by Professor Max Müller.

tions of the world were fully realised. The great discoveries of comparative philology have had considerable influence on the scholars and thinkers of India, and the leaders of public opinion in that country. They rose under its influence from an attitude of relative prostration before the mental superiority of the West, to learn that intellectually, if not also physically, they had been the equals of Greeks, Romans, and Saxons, and that the ascertained fact of the past might be shaped into an aspiration for the future. 'Such silent influences,' it has been pertinently said, 'often escape the eye of the politician and the historian; but at critical moments they may decide the fate of whole nations and empires.'

India and Europe have begun vividly to affect the activity of each other; studies are reciprocated; science is subjected to a mutual enlargement; the grosser forms of the theology of the one are being refined and elevated, if not actually abandoned, for the more spiritual conceptions of the other; and the caste fetters of social restriction acquire elasticity, or else loosen themselves before dropping off from limbs that rebel against their irritation. This interchange of sentiment and respect, which we have endeavoured briefly to trace to its origin, has, up to the present time, reached its culmination in the visit to India of which the records are now before us; and may be borne in mind, along with the more obvious attractions of the immense extent of his future empire in the East, and the splendid and misty glories of its hoary civilisation and intellectual achievements, as compelling from the Prince of Wales at the banquet given in honour of his birthday, November 9th, 1875,

the day after his landing at Bombay, the generous and full-hearted words: 'It has long been my earnest wish—the dream of my life—to visit India.' How many of us there are who are doomed to cherish the same aspiration in life-long disappointment!

At the time when many of the details and circumstances of the projected visit were canvassed both in and out of Parliament, it was predicted, with what was a practical unanimity, that it could hardly fail of being of immense importance to the history of the Indian Empire. It was trusted, and events have so far borne out the anticipation, that the royal tour would bring India and Indian interests more clearly home to English feeling than years of ordinary intercourse; that it would entail incalculable consequences in the more vivid relations it would establish between English and Indian life; and, further, that it would be the offering of a worthy homage to the noblest inheritance in the world by its future possessor. There were two modes, as explained by the Prime Minister on the 15th of July 1875, in which the Prince of Wales might visit India. He might go as the proclaimed representative of the sovereign, and his journey would in that case be a royal progress. He would be attended with military array, and with a retinue of princes and chieftains; he would hold durbars; he would probably be expected to institute an order of chivalry; he would pay regal visits to those who possessed regal power; he would not only experience, but he would exercise, a magnificent hospitality; he would not only be present at feasts, but he would preside at festivals, and on the whole would promote a display and create an excitement without parallel in India since the

days of the Great Mogul. On the other hand, the Prince might visit India as the guest of her Majesty's Viceroy—and this was the alternative proposed to be carried out—under whose guidance and influence he might have an admirable opportunity of becoming largely, if not completely, acquainted with the splendid scenery of that great peninsula, its ancient and teeming cities, and the vast variety of its nations and races. He would visit some of the principal chieftains of the land, enjoy their hospitality and share their exciting pastimes. He would throughout have an opportunity of displaying that liberality which was natural to his amiable and generous disposition; and would return to this country with the bountiful results of a large and matured experience. Mr. Bright trusted that the visit of the Prince might act as a corrective to the rudeness, coarseness, and dominancy of too many English officials and settlers towards the people of India; and would be glad to know hereafter that the unfailing kindness, generosity, and courtesy of the Prince had brought about a new epoch, from which should date a period of marked improvement in the conduct of all Englishmen intrusted by their country with the government of the vast population of India. He thought it probable that, by his personal conduct, his courtesy, kindness, and sympathy with that great people over whom it might one day be his tremendous responsibility to rule, the Prince of Wales might leave behind him memories that would be of exceeding value, and equal in influence to the greatest measures of state policy that any government could propound.

In the light of words so kindly and so momentous, it is little wonder to read of the solemnity of

demeanour which characterised the Prince at his first landing in India, where he was to be regarded as the exemplar and, so to say, the incarnation of English graciousness and sympathy amongst a people, many of whom believed they had grievances arising from the superciliousness of less exalted specimens of their English fellow-subjects :

'Some who saw the Prince as he landed thought they observed that he had a graver cast of countenance than was habitual with him a few years ago, and said they did not know whether to attribute it to the sun, which was unusually hot for the time of year, or to the emotion caused by the novelty and grandeur of the scene, accustomed as he was to such sights. Others wrote that he "seemed serious and even sad of aspect" as he walked up the landing-stage from the royal barge, and that he "returned the salutations which greeted him with a pre-occupied air that betrayed emotions working within." But at all events his answer to the address of the Corporation was delivered with the utmost clearness of elocution, and in a manner which gained the hearts of those who saw him, if, indeed, they at all required any gaining.'

The *Prince of Wales's Tour* is an imposing and stately work in two volumes, and may be regarded as in some sense official, seeing that Dr. Russell held the appointment of honorary private secretary to his Royal Highness, to whom, by permission, the *Tour* is dedicated. It is adorned with numerous illustrations, full page, vignettes, and tail-pieces, by Mr. Sydney P. Hall, artist in the suite of the Prince of Wales; and has for its frontispiece a photograph of the Prince, taken from life by Messrs. Lock & Whitfield, July 17th, 1876. The word 'official' just used in reference to Dr. Russell's Diary should be understood in the light of the short address 'To the Reader,' which occupies the next page to the dedication :

'A few words to the reader to explain some matters connected with this book. It is a Journal or Diary kept from day

to day, in which the Prince of Wales is the central figure round which all the things, persons, and events mentioned in it revolve, so that if his name and title occur repeatedly in the same page, it is necessary, from the nature of the work, that they should do so. The impressions recorded by the writer are his own; and if, as is rarely the case, opinions are expressed on questions of policy or of government, they must not be ascribed to any one but to him who states them. Wherever the word "we" occurs, the reader is prayed to take it as meaning "the royal party," not as the pronoun in an editorial sense, or as indicative of any intent to involve the identity of the Prince with that of the gentlemen who accompanied him.'

An 'Introduction' traces the general progress, with the difficulties and occasional postponements of the idea of the Prince's tour, from its earliest suggestion by Lord Canning, and favourable reception by the Prince Consort, to the time of the arrival at Brindisi, the first stage of its happy consummation, where the Prince embarked on board the *Serapis*, October 16th, 1875, the date with which Dr. Russell's 'Diary' formally begins.

We pass over the trip to the Piræus.

After leaving Aden, our 'Indian Gibraltar,' the *Serapis* quietly stood on her way to Bombay, which was reached on the 8th of November, the Prince on landing being received by all the civil and military officers, and all the ladies that could be gathered together from hundreds of miles round. When the Prince came on shore the anxiety of the chiefs to see him was almost painful. For once they were much agitated, and the proudest departed from the cover of their habitual reserve and from the maintenance of that staid deportment which the Oriental Turveydrop considers the best proof of high state and regal dignity. The Prince was at first shut out from their view, or was only revealed at times in the centre

of a waving mass of cocked hats, plumed helmets, uniforms, and European dresses, in which he was scarcely distinguishable; but when they could identify him, the frankness of his smile, and the candid look with which he surveyed them, produced on the instant a favourable impression.

The reception of the various chiefs on the day following the landing was an interesting scene. A salute of twenty-one guns announced the arrival of the Maharaja of Mysore, the adopted son of the Maharaja who died in 1867, and the restoration of whose house is one of the most remarkable political acts of any recent Indian Government.

In the course of a graphic description of the scenes in the arena offered by the Gaekwar at Baroda for the diversion of the Prince, Dr. Russell declares his belief that the elephants shammed the fighting; but there was no doubt that the buffaloes meant business. From Baroda his Royal Highness and party returned to Bombay, which they left on the 25th of November, on their rather uncertain way by sea to Goa, the reports of cholera in Southern India having made their future prospects rather unsettled, and having compelled them to consider their shooting excursion in the interior of that part of the Peninsula as definitively abandoned.

The next place of stoppage was Beypoor, which they left on the evening of the 29th for Colombo; and at noon on the following day the squadron was off Quilon, whilst at 5 P.M. Cape Comorin was well in sight—'the end of India.' Colombo was reached on the 1st of December, and Ceylon proceeded to go into ecstasies of loyal demonstration.

In Ceylon the Prince enjoyed

some eventful elephant-shooting; and the whole party were entranced by the prodigality of the most lovely and varied vegetation, the joy of which was tempered by the wicked plenitude of leeches, centipedes, and vicious reptiles and insects. Two illusions were likewise disturbed—the Veddahs demonstrated that they had the power and even the custom of laughter; and the treasured tooth of Gotama Buddha was all but proved to be the false production of some fraudulent dentist.

Levés, receptions, banquets, and other ceremonies occupied the halting-times of the Prince between Tuticorin and Madras, where, for the first time, his identity was infallibly assured to the uninitiated, and often bewildered, spectators by the ingenuity of the Duke of Buckingham:

‘The golden umbrella held over the Prince’s head was an excellent thought, and relieved many doubting minds. It is not always easy even for those familiar with European usages to make out the principal person in a public procession. The Duke of Buckingham, whose attention to details caused the whole Madras visit to be so successful, seized on the Oriental idea of having an umbrella as a special means of identifying the Prince, and thereby gratified thousands of people. “I am not sure if I have seen him after all,” exclaimed a chief at Bombay, “and I have travelled 600 miles merely to get a look at the Shahzadah!” Another chief said to the Minister of a native State, “Think what a way I have come to see the Prince!—think what distances we have journeyed, and yet we are only permitted to gaze on his face for a moment!” “Very true,” replied the Minister, “but just think what a way the Prince has come to see you!”’

At Madras, durbars, presentations, and return visits occupied the attention of the Prince and the native chieftains; but the characteristic amusement of the place—to say nothing of the races and of the meet of the Madras pack at Guindy, each of which presented several features of interest—

was the illumination of the surf, for which the roadstead is so famous and so formidable. Embarking at Madras on the 18th of December, when the people are said largely to have stayed away from the parting ceremony out of sorrow for the Prince’s leaving, his Royal Highness arrived on the 23d at Calcutta, the entry into which, on the ground that ‘such pageants are singularly alike,’ Dr. Russell forbears to particularise; and we are bound to honour the occasional breach of a custom, the too frequent observance of which might become tedious in narration, however brilliant and stirring in action. In the City of Palaces the Prince received the Maharajas of Puttiala, Holkar of Indoor, of Jeypoor, of Cashmere, of Rewah, and the Sultana Jehan, Begum of Bhopal. Christmas-day was remarkable for the attendance of the Prince and the Viceroy at the cathedral, where, at a full choral service, and before a crowded congregation, the late Bishop Milman preached a charity sermon for distressed Europeans.

‘It contained no reference to the Prince’s visit. It was an earnest and powerful appeal to Christians to set an example to the heathen. Every Englishman in India was a missionary; he became a minister of God or a minister of evil; he was charged with the burden of Christ. By his life was Christ’s teaching judged. This principle of direct responsibility Bishop Milman insisted on most forcibly, concluding with an admirable appeal for aid to our distressed countrymen.’

Another reception of chiefs took place at Government House on the 27th, at which attended the emissaries from the King of Burmah, the Maharaja of Punnah, an embassy from the Nepalese Government, Raghbeer Sing, the Raja of Jheend, the Maharaja of Benares, and the Maharaja of Nahun, to whom, on the day

following, return visits were paid. A grand chapter of the Star of India, attended with great pomp of investiture, was held on New Year's-day 1876, in the afternoon of which the Prince unveiled an equestrian statue of the late Lord Mayo, on the Maidan or plain near Government House.

It is unnecessary to follow the various pageants incidental to the Prince's itinerary from Calcutta, *viâ* Bankipoor, Patna, Benares, Ramnagar, Fyzabad, Lucknow, and Cawnpoor, to 'imperial Delhi.' Lucknow, however, was the scene of one of the most pathetic episodes described within the princely covers of Dr. Russell's *Odyssey*. The occasion was the laying of the memorial-stone to the loyal Sepoys who fell in the defence of the Residency at Lucknow. One veteran, led in by his sons, nearly blind from a wound, exclaimed, 'Let me see him.' The Prince, understanding what he meant, told his officers to permit him to approach. The veteran, with his hand to his turban at the salute, came quite close, peered into the Prince's face, drew a deep sigh, and said, 'I thank Heaven I have lived to see this day and the Prince's face.' But when he felt the Prince had taken his hand he burst into tears, and was led sobbing away. If only we could multiply *ad libitum* amongst English officials the fine tact and the gracious tenderness thus manifested by the Prince of Wales, a reflection made by Dr. Russell a few pages farther on in his narrative would be deprived of all its sting and significance. 'If we ever lose India,' he writes, 'it will be from want of sympathy.'

A grand review was held at Delhi on the 12th of January, followed on succeeding days by various military manœuvres; whilst the short stay at Lahore,

which the Prince reached in the early morning of the 18th, was remarkable for a circuit which he made in the environs of the city, in order to pass near the encampments of the Rajas of the Punjab.

The various chiefs had of course to be received and visited by the Prince; who left Lahore on the 20th to visit the Maharaja of Cashmere at Jummoo, seven miles from which the Maharaja appeared with his principal Sirdars, and a magnificent sowaree, to welcome the Prince to his dominions. The same, if not a greater and rarer, splendour distinguished the escort prepared for the departure of the Prince on the 22d on his return to Lahore, whence he journeyed *viâ* Umritsir, celebrated for its Golden Temple, in which is the Holy Book or Grunt of Nanuk, to Agra, the unique glory of which is the Taj Mahal, which the Prince, after paying return visits to the fourteen chiefs whom he had previously received at a levée, went on the evening of the 27th to see illuminated, and to which he paid a subsequent visit with the more fitting and harmonious accompaniment of the unassisted and unmocked Indian moonlight. 'The Taj Mahal by Moonlight' is, indeed, one of the most beautiful and poetic of the illustrations for which we are indebted to the subtle pencil of Mr. Sydney P. Hall; and the Taj supplies very naturally one of the most eloquent and gently thrilling of all Dr. Russell's descriptions.

'Most writers who have tried their hands at a description of the Taj set out with the admission that it is indescribable, and then "proceed to give some idea" of it. I do not know how many of the fair ladies present agreed with Colonel Seeman's wife, who said to him, "I cannot criticise, but I can tell you what I feel. I would die to-morrow to have such a tomb!" Holy and profane men, poets,

poets, and practical people, all write of the Taj in the same strain. "Too pure, too holy to be the work of human hands!"—"a poem in marble!"—"the sigh of a broken heart!"—"poetic marble arrayed in eternal glory!"—"the inspiration is from heaven—the execution worthy of it!" But the Taj with 7000 spectators—7000 people who came to look at the Prince of Wales looking at the Taj! Well, it played its part to perfection.

Ascending the terrace, the Prince walked over to the shelter of the dark gateway of the mosque. Gradually there grew out, in all its fair proportions and beauty, framed in the purple of the starry heavens, the marble "Queen of Sorrow," which has power to dim every eye. Then trooping into the illuminated square came a band, and forthwith the soft tender notes of "Vedrai carino" floated through the night air. It may be doubted if Moomtaz-i-Mahul, or "the Exalted One of the Palace," would have quite approved of the music. However, Mozart was better than the *maestro* whose compositions next challenged the ears of the company. But the eye mastered every sense, and the loveliness of the Taj stole over the soul. In spite of blue lights and lime lights, of lively dance music, of clank of spurs and sabres on the complaining marble, there was not a point which the peerless mausoleum could make which was for an instant marred or lost. Entering the tomb itself—the culminating glory—the party stood and gazed, almost trembling with admiration. Presently a clear, sustained note rose up into the vaulted roof of the tomb, and there found its counterpart, and the two commingled, swept upwards, and soared away, "till naught remained 'twixt them and silence." Again and again the notes soared, and the auditors stood breathless. Then came a few chords in sweet unison from four or five singers, but to my ear the effect was not so impressive as that of an old Moulvie's voice reading prayers when last I was there. That grand, grumbling chant awoke echoes which sounded like the responses of some vast congregation. The interior has been swept, garnished, cleaned, and, as far as can be, restored. If Shah Jehan could come back to earth, it is not too much to suppose that he would thank Sir John Strachey for the labour of love which has stayed the hand of the spoiler.

We do not attempt to follow the Prince in his excursions from Agra to Bhurtpoor, to Futtehpoor Sikri, or to Gwalior, with the details of Scindia's review, state banquet, and loyal expressions.

On the 8th of February the Prince escaped from the burdens of high state to the comparative

freedom of a protracted hunting expedition to the Terai, a prairie-like formation lying outside the belt of woodland which girdles the base of the Himalayas, and is by reputation full of tigers. In ten days, however, not more than four of these animals had been secured; and it was only when the party crossed the river Sarda, and entered the territory of Nepal, where they were received and accompanied by Sir Jung Bahadoor, that they found themselves in the choicest tiger and elephant preserves.

Adventures and dangers of various kinds were not to seek; it sometimes happened that those who came to hunt scarcely remained to be hunted. Especially was this the case on an occasion when a powerful and courageous old 'tusker,' to whom Dr. Russell tearfully gives the name 'Miserrimus,' charged the fleeing horsemen and pad-elephants, and was only brought to a sense of propriety by the mingled skill and prowess of a couple of fighting elephants, Bijli and Jung Pershaud by name, the latter the champion elephant of the Nepalese woods.

'Sir Jung's face was a picture to see, and if looks could kill, the fugitive was a dead elephant. "Call up the pads. Let the Prince mount at once," he exclaimed. But his Royal Highness expressed a wish to ride, and thereby secured the success of the day; for there can be no doubt it was only the speed of the horses which enabled the party to come up with the runaway and bring him to bay; and finally—but I anticipate. If Sir Jung rode before, he flew now. It is wonderful how we got through that gallop; for, to the difficulties of the nature already mentioned to be negotiated, there was added the violent shying of the horses at the trumpeting pads. In ten minutes there was an awful clamour on our flank. Hundreds of pads, with mahouts and mallet-men, yelling like maniacs, passed at full speed in a succession of brown waves through the glade. The trackers had hit off the spot where the tusker had passed. They were in full pursuit. Sir Jung turned towards the plain. When the horsemen reached

the verge of the forest, they saw before them, in a plain of high grass, a huge brown back, borne along on invisible legs, reminding one very much of a half-submerged whale cleaving its way in a placid sea. The cheer that burst forth—a joyous English hunting “Tally-ho!” “Hark forward!”—was such as was never heard before, and will probably never be heard again, in Nepalese jungle. The cry took the hunted elephant aback. He paused, raised his proboscis inquiringly, looked round with an air as of one who would say, “What manner of men be these?” then, after a brief survey, he resumed his course for the swamp. The instant the elephant stopped, Sir Jung shouted, “Shahzadah! take care! Look out, all of you! You must not go near him! In that long grass you have no chance of getting away!” But when he saw the elephant was moving away, he clapped spurs to his horse and, keeping outside the thick grass, galloped in a line parallel to the course of the beast. Away went the Prince, away went every one, *sans terre*, with a “Hark forward!” that made the woods echo. Very soon the horsemen were careering in front of the monster, on a piece of burnt prairie, where the reeds were so thick and stiff as almost to force one's foot out of the stirrup. It could be seen that he was sore distressed. He had been on the move incessantly from dawn; had travelled over mountain and valley; had no time to rest or to eat; his sides were heaving, his gait was heavy, he tossed his head wearily from side to side, showing one, and but one, very large tusk and the stump of another. But he was tremendous in bulk and stature. He came on, bigger and bigger as he loomed above the cleared space. Then, his proboscis extended, his tail straight out, he stood and looked around; suddenly uttering a shrill cry, he made a run at the horsemen who were circling before him. There was something so ludicrous in the gait and attitude of the charging elephant that every one, as he bent down on his saddle and rode literally for his life, burst out laughing—all except Sir Jung, who, with one eye over his shoulder, kept calling out, “Look out, Prince! Take care, Prince!” (“Shahzadah! Kuberdar!”) But though the speed at which his strange, shambling shuffle carried him along was extraordinary, the beast was much too fatigued to continue it very long. He halted, blew a note of rage, swaying his head to and fro, and flapping his ears. It was of the utmost consequence to keep him in the open, and take as much out of him as possible, till the fighting elephants could come up. In a moment the horsemen wheeled and swept round him, Sir Jung shaking his fist and using the most opprobrious terms to the indignant animal. Down went his head, up went proboscis and tail once more. This time he turned straight on the Prince, who was shaking with laughter as he put his horse—a splendid Arab—to his top speed. Fast as

he went, the terrible proboscis was not many yards behind for a second or two; but the pace was too great to last. The horses evidently had the pull in this ground; and there was nothing to fear but a fall or stumble, and then—well, “nothing can save you!” Over and over again the bold attack and precipitate flight were repeated. It was now Mr. Rose, now Lord Suffield, now Lord Carington, who was singled out, as one happened to be nearest. All the party had the honour of a run in turn. Lord Alfred Paget and Lord C. Beresford, who had remained on pad-elephants, not expecting such a finish to the day, were out of the hunt; and Prince Louis of Battenberg had given a jar to his broken collar-bone, and was returning to camp.

All this time we were expecting the champions; we were but the *celétes* engaging the enemy till the solid infantry could come up. Repeated messengers were despatched to hasten the fighting elephants; but the redoubtable Jung Pershaud was rather done about the legs, as is the manner of giants, and could not travel fast, and Bijli Pershaud was far in the rear. The hunted elephant, either too much fatigued to charge his persecutors any more, or having duly reflected on the best course to pursue, now set off at a quick walk in the direction of the marsh from which it was above all things desirable to keep him. In vain the horsemen capered in front of him, rode up to his flanks, and passed within switch of his tail. On he went, like a porpoise through a shoal of herrings, sweeping his proboscis right and left. It was exciting to be able to get so close to him; it was irritating to be so powerless to control his course or divert him from his purpose. Nearer and nearer loomed the tall rushes, the waving reeds, the long feathery grass of the swamp. “He will escape, by Jove! Can nothing be done? Where are those wretched elephants?” The Prince, Sir Jung, all make a final and close attack; but he is not to be led away. He enters the swamp; the rushes and tall reeds close behind him; he is lost to sight. There is an exclamation of something more than disappointment; but Sir Jung says calmly, “We are sure of him when Jung Pershaud comes up. That fellow will not go far; he cannot leave the marsh.” There was a belt of trees close at hand. All sat down in the shade. A Nepalese was sent up a tall tree. “He sees the elephant,” said Sir Jung. “The haramzadah is in a pool, splashing and cooling himself. It is as I expected.” As the champions who are coming down have names, and “haramzadah” is not a nice one, I shall call the runagate Miserimus.

Half an hour and more passed. All this time the army of pad-elephants had been rounding the edge of the swamp, and we could see them draw up in a dense living barrier. Sir Jung sent off an aide-de-camp every five minutes. “He will



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quite recover," said Sir Jung, "if this goes on, and be able to fight his way out, perhaps!" At last a bell, like that of a town-crier, was heard ringing from afar. There was a joyous cry, "Jung Pershaud is coming!" The head of the great brute, painted a bright red, came in sight above the reeds. He was plodding heavily along, but with an evident air of business about him; and as if he had to keep an appointment with his antagonist in that precise spot, he went straight into the swamp. When Miserrimus heard the strange clang of the bell swinging from Jung Pershaud's neck coming down on him, he slowly turned and swept away the reeds with his proboscis, so as to get a clearer view. Miserrimus had only one tusk and the stump of another; but his perfect tusk was a beauty, and it ended in a very fine point. This he lowered, as if to receive cavalry. Jung did not give Miserrimus much time for reflection. He was a trained bruiser, and he was larger than the other, big as he was. Jung, moreover, had two very strong tusks, cut short, indeed, but still four feet or five feet long, and bound round with brass rings to prevent fracture. Jung, raising his proboscis with a flourish, ran in, and when within a foot of his enemy's weapon swerved a little, and gave him what I can only term "a clout" on the side of the head. Miserrimus turned a little to get his sole tusk to bear. Jung, passing on towards his quarter, gave him a ram right on the beam, which fairly "reeled" him half over. The thud was like a stroke on the big drum in a silent theatre. It was followed by a fearful battering ram in the quarter gallery. That was enough for Miserrimus. "There's more," quoth he to himself, "where that came from;" and as Jung drew back to administer ram No. 3, his antagonist fairly bolted, and, with unexpected nimbleness, set out for the open country, leaving Jung to beat the empty air. Miserrimus had evidently mastered the situation. "This trained assassin is bigger and stronger than I am, but I am more fleet of foot. I am refreshed by my bath, and I'll make for the forest, where horses cannot follow me. As for these pads—disgraceful females—I'll sweep them away like flies." Thus meditating, he received a dig in the stern from Jung Pershaud, which nearly sent him on his wise head, and quickened the resolve. There was a tremendous squelching in the grass, and in a minute more Miserrimus came out, heading for the wooded ridge. As he calculated, the pads and smaller fighting elephants turned in the most abject terror. Jung made one more strenuous attempt to engage him, but Miserrimus was at least two knots faster; he slipped into the very wood in which we were, long before the other could reach it.

Horsemen in a forest have no chance of escaping an elephant. Sir Jung's anxiety was intense. "Don't go near him! Keep him in view, that is all!"

It was marvellous to see how the elephant, resistless as Fate, crashed along, only turning for the larger trees. Miserrimus continued his career till he reached a small stream, and saw he would have to cross some open ground before he could reach the great forest. All our hope now was in Bijli Pershaud—the "Lightning" conqueror. The Prince had ridden out of the belt, expecting to see the fight renewed outside, and I was following, when I saw Sir Jung riding among the trees as fast as he could manage it, with Mr. Girdlestone's Arab horse-breaker "Bill" and Captain Grant after him. On the skirts of the wood was a deep, ditch-like stream. Sir Jung went at it and cleared the brook, but the horse very near lost his balance and slipped in. "Bill" sailed across like a bird. Captain Grant was over at the same moment; I was obliged to go a little higher up. The horse breasted the bank, and sent me skimming gracefully along the ground on the other side; but as my Arab did not attempt to run away, I was enabled to mount, thanks to Captain Grant, and follow my leader. I was surprised to see Sir Jung suddenly pull up outside the forest, shake his fist, and hear him pour out a volley of invective on some one inside. "He is abusing the elephant," said Captain Grant. "He is insulting his female relations, and calling him every name in the world!" And there, sure enough, standing against a tree, was Miserrimus listening intently to Sir Jung, as if he were taking notes for an action of defamation. There were only the four of us. Whether he thought he could finish the little lot off-hand, or that his feelings were roused to madness by a remark affecting the reputation of his deceased mother, I cannot say; but without sound or note of warning, like a house undermined by a flood, he plunged into the stream, and was at us in a moment. At this supreme moment Bijli Pershaud emerged from the covert a few yards away. Not so large as Jung Pershaud, but comparatively fresh, and of great courage. Miserrimus saw his new antagonist. He halted. "Fly from him! never!" So he set his fore legs a little apart, lowered his head, and prepared for battle. Rash and ridiculous Miserrimus! You are doomed. Bijli came on at full speed, and the two met with what ought to have been concussion of brains and smashes of frontal bones. It was a terrific encounter. Bijli was the quickest. Whether he was aided by the craft of man on his back or not, he delivered a tremendous blow on the port bow of Miserrimus which shook him from stem to stern, and seemed to spring a leak. Still Miserrimus tried to find sea-room for a run, but Bijli had fairly "got him" now on his flank, and kept to it. When Miserrimus ran, Bijli ran too, and, being faster, was always able to resume his station on the beam, and ram him before he could tack or wear. The Prince came in time to see the final defeat of Miserrimus, who,

after several rallies, had just been caught *en flagrant délit* close to a tree. Bijli gave him a ram against it, which made the branches quiver. This was repeated. Miserrimus seemed quite stupefied. The attendants of the small fighting-beasts, who had now come up, passed a turn of rope round his hind leg, while Bijli sought to engage his attention by giving him resonant whacks over the head and eyes with his trunk. But Miserrimus felt the rope, and broke away before it could be secured. He ran once more, followed by the relentless Bijli, pursued by the small fighting-beasts, and encircled by a cloud of horsemen. It was almost his last effort. Bijli gave him a stupendous and crashing ram in the quarter, which nearly sent him over. Then, and then only, poor Miserrimus said, as plainly as elephant could say it, "I give in!" There must be some elephant language as plain as any spoken words. He dropped his proboscis, as a vanquished knight lowers his sword-point, blew a feeble tootle of a trumpet, full of dependency—a cry for mercy—and stood screening his shame with his huge ears. Bijli accepted the surrender on the instant. He approached in a fondling sort of way, wound his proboscis round the captive's neck, and, I daresay, complimented him on his very handsome resistance. "But, after all, Miserrimus, the odds were against you. There was old Jung Pershaud, and you beat him, and did very well; but I am 'Bijli,' you know!" As Miserrimus was thinking what answer to make to these compliments, the knaves with the ropes were at work again, and this time they made good their knot. He, however, gave a tottering run, which put the horsemen to flight; but there was no chance—a great rope trailing behind him, Bijli and four fighting-elephants beating him over the head, and battering his poor sides. Miserrimus stood still. Bijli stood before him, two elephants patted him with their trunks, and jammed him between them on each side till a rope was made fast to the other hind leg, and both were secured. He was now regularly taken into custody. The deed was done, and the brave and chivalrous old warrior was beaten to his knees. And lo! it was then discovered that Miserrimus was blind of an eye. He had, no doubt, lost it in the same fight in which his tusk had been broken off. Bijli had got at the blind side of Miserrimus. When this discovery was made, there was pity for Belisarius, and Sir Jung said, "I will let him go if the Prince expresses a wish that he should be set at liberty, but I hope to be allowed to offer his Royal Highness the tusk." The Prince at once demanded grace for the captive, and he was led away to a great tree, where he was moored by a veritable cable; but he made one great effort to get away, and strained the tree to its summit ere he submitted. The cruel ropes, not as they always do for the good ship at sea, held fast. Then he uttered one very bitter

cry. It is said that his wives answered him from afar, but for this I cannot vouch. There he stood, sullen and silent, rejecting with scorn the sugar-cane held out at arm's length of his proboscis. Next morning Miserrimus was set free, and went off in search of his family, who treated him, I hope, with the respect due to the brave and unfortunate. When Sir Jung came over to the Prince's camp-fire that night, he was accompanied by men bearing the beautiful tusk, which had been sawn off soon after we left. So ended the elephant hunt, which was perhaps the "best day" in India.

The romance of the Prince's tour has now been largely discounted. What was in effect the homeward route began on the 6th of March, when the Prince reached Bareilly, having bowled along at a famous rate through 'Topey' Rohilkund, over a new road which had been made for many miles through the forest.

At Allahabad was held a chapter of investiture of the Order of the Star of India; and on the 8th of March, the Prince, being then at Jubalpoor, made the acquaintance of seven miserales who had been for thirty-five years in gaol, having committed an incredible number of murders in pursuit of their profession as Thugs. Their lives had been spared because they had turned approvers; and the most venerable of them all, who had a hideous leer and a ferocious mouth, almost chuckled as, with hands placed together in a deprecating way, he gave, in answer to a question, 'sixty-seven' as the number of his victims. But even this goodly reckoning was far exceeded by the exploits of another member of the same persuasion, whom the Prince met elsewhere.

We may take leave of Dr. Russell's Diary with a hopeful anticipation of the results of what is likely to be—or what has up to this time been, for we hear of a contemplated voyage to the furthest verge of our colonial empire—the most momentous of all peaceful royal progresses.

MICHAEL STROGOFF, OR THE RUSSIAN COURIER.

By JULES VERNE.

PART II.

CHAPTER XII.

IRKUTSK.

IRKUTSK, the capital of Eastern Siberia, is a populous town, containing in ordinary times thirty thousand inhabitants. On the right side of the Angara rises a hill, on which are built numerous churches, a lofty cathedral, and the dwellings of its inhabitants disposed in picturesque disorder.

Seen at a distance from the top of the mountain, which rises at about twenty versts off along the Siberian high-road, this town, with its cupolas, its bell-towers, its steeples slender as minarets, its domes like pot-bellied Chinese jars, presents something of an Oriental aspect. But this similarity vanishes as soon as the traveller enters.

The town, half Byzantine, half Chinese, becomes European as soon as he sees its macadamised roads, bordered with pavements, traversed by canals, planted with gigantic birches; its houses of brick and wood, some of which have several stories; the numerous equipages which drive along, not only tarantass and telgas, but broughams and coaches; lastly, its numerous inhabitants, far advanced in the progress of civilisation, and to whom the latest Paris fashions are not unknown.

Being the refuge for all the Siberians of the province, Irkutsk was at this time very full. Stores of every kind had been collected in abundance. Irkutsk is the

emporium of the innumerable merchandise which are exchanged between China, Central Asia, and Europe. The authorities had therefore no fear with regard to admitting the peasants of the valley of the Angara, Mongol-Khalkas, Tougouzes, Bowets, and leaving a desert between the invaders and the town.

Irkutsk is the residence of the governor-general of Eastern Siberia. Below him acts a civil governor, in whose hand is concentrated the administration of the province; a head of police, who has much to do in a town where exiles abound; and lastly a mayor, chief of the merchants, and a person of some importance, from his immense fortune and the influence which he exercises over the people under him.

The garrison of Irkutsk was at that time composed of an infantry regiment of Cossacks, consisting of two thousand men, and a body of police wearing helmets and blue uniforms laced with silver.

Besides, as has been said, in consequence of the events which had occurred, the brother of the Czar had been shut up in the town since the beginning of the invasion.

A journey of political importance had taken the Grand Duke to these distant provinces of Central Asia.

After passing through the principal Siberian cities, the Grand Duke, who travelled *en militaire* rather than *en prince*, without any

parade, accompanied by his officers, and escorted by a regiment of Cossacks, arrived in the Trans-Baikal province. Nikolaevsk, the last Russian town situated on the shore of the sea of Okhotsk, had been honoured by a visit from him.

Arrived on the confines of the immense Muscovite empire, the Grand Duke was returning towards Irkutsk, from which place he intended to retake the road to Moscow, when, sudden as a thunderclap, came the news of the invasion.

He hastened to the capital, but only reached it just before communication with Russia had been interrupted. There was time to receive only a few telegrams from St. Petersburg and Moscow, and with difficulty to answer them, before the wire was cut, under circumstances already related.

Irkutsk was isolated from the rest of the world.

The Grand Duke had now only to prepare for resistance, and this he did with that determination and coolness of which, under other circumstances, he had given incontestable proofs.

The news of the taking of Ichim, Omak, and Tomak successively reached Irkutsk.

It was necessary at any price to save the capital of Siberia. Reinforcements could not be expected for some time. The few troops scattered about in the provinces of the Amoor and in the government of Yakutsk could not arrive in sufficiently large numbers to arrest the progress of the Tartar columns. Since, therefore, it was impossible for Irkutsk to escape an investment, the most important thing to be done was to put the town in a state to sustain a siege of some duration.

The preparations were begun on the day Tomak fell into the

hands of the Tartars. At the same time with this last news, the Grand Duke heard that the Emir of Bokhara and the allied Khans were directing the invasion in person; but what he did not know was, that the lieutenant of these barbarous chiefs was Ivan Ogareff, a Russian officer whom he had himself reduced to the ranks, but with whose person he was not acquainted.

First of all, as we have seen, the inhabitants of the province of Irkutsk were compelled to abandon the towns and villages. Those who did not take refuge in the capital had to retire beyond Lake Baikal, a district to which the invasion would probably not extend its ravages. The harvests of corn and fodder were collected and stored up in the town, and Irkutsk, the last bulwark of the Muscovite power in the far East, was put in a condition to resist the enemy for a lengthened period.

Irkutsk, founded in 1611, is situated at the confluence of the Irkut and the Augara, on the right bank of the latter river. Two wooden bridges built on piles, and arranged so as to draw up for the purposes of navigation, connected the town with its suburbs on the left bank. On this side defence was easy. The suburbs were abandoned, the bridges destroyed. The Augara being here very wide, it would not be possible to pass under the fire of the besieged.

But the river might be crossed both above and below the town, and consequently Irkutsk ran a risk of being attacked on its east side, which no wall could protect.

The whole population were immediately set to work on the fortifications. They laboured day and night. The Grand Duke observed with satisfaction the zeal exhibited by the people in the

work, and whom ere long he would find equally courageous in the defence. Soldiers, merchants, exiles, peasants, all devoted themselves to the common safety. A week before the Tartars appeared on the Augara, earthworks had been raised. A fosse, flooded by the waters of the Augara, was dug between the scarp and counter-scarp. The town could not now be taken by a *coup de main*. It must be invested and besieged.

The third Tartar column, the one which came up the valley of the Yeniseï on the 24th of September, appeared in sight of Irkutsk. It immediately occupied the deserted suburbs, every building in which had been destroyed, so as not to impede the fire of the Grand Duke's guns, unfortunately but few in number and of small calibre.

The Tartar troops as they arrived organised a camp on the bank of the Augara whilst waiting the arrival of the two other columns commanded by the Emir and his allies.

The junction of these different bodies was effected on the 25th of September in the Augara camp, and the whole of the invading army, except the garrisons left in the principal conquered towns, was concentrated under the command of Feofar-Khan.

The passage of the Augara in front of Irkutsk having been regarded by Ogareff as impracticable, a strong body of troops crossed several versts up the river by means of bridges formed with boats.

The Grand Duke did not attempt to oppose the enemy in their passage. He could only impede, not prevent it, having no field-artillery at his disposal, and he therefore remained in Irkutsk.

The Tartars now occupied the right bank of the river; then,

advancing towards the town, they burnt in passing the summer-house of the governor-general, and at last, having entirely invested Irkutsk, took up their positions for the siege.

Ivan Ogareff, who was a clever engineer, was perfectly competent to direct a regular siege; but he did not possess the materials for operating rapidly. He was disappointed too in the chief object of all his efforts—the surprise of Irkutsk.

Things had turned out differently from what his calculations had led him to expect. First, the march of the Tartar army was delayed by the battle of Tomsk; and secondly, the preparations for the defence were made far more rapidly than he had supposed to be the case; these two things had been enough to balk his plans. He was now under the necessity of instituting a regular siege of the town.

However, by his suggestion, the Emir twice attempted the capture of the place, at the cost of a large sacrifice of men. He threw soldiers on the earthworks which presented any weak point; but these two assaults were repulsed with the greatest courage. The Grand Duke and his officers did not spare themselves on this occasion. They appeared in person; they led the civil population to the ramparts. Citizens and peasants both did their duty.

At the second attack, the Tartars managed to force one of the gates. A fight took place at the head of Bolchaïa-street, two versts long, which abuts on the banks of the Augara. But the Cossacks, the police, the citizens, united in so fierce a resistance, that the Tartars were compelled to withdraw.

Ivan Ogareff then thought of obtaining by stratagem what he could not gain by force.

We have said his plan was to penetrate into the town, to make his way to the Grand Duke, to gain his confidence, and when the time came to give up the gates to the besiegers, and, that done, to wreak his vengeance on the brother of the Czar.

The Tsigane Sangarre, who had accompanied him to the Augara camp, urged him to put this plan in execution.

Indeed it was necessary to act without delay.

The Russian troops from the government of Yakutsk were advancing towards Irkutsk. They had concentrated on the upper course of the Lena, and were marching up its valley. In six days they would arrive. Therefore, before six days had passed, Irkutsk must be betrayed.

Ivan Ogareff hesitated no longer.

One evening, the 2d of October, a council of war was held in the grand saloon of the palace of the governor-general. It was there the Grand Duke resided.

This palace, standing at the end of Bolchaïa-street, overlooked the river for some distance. From the windows of its principal façade could be seen the camp of the Tartars, and had they possessed guns of a longer range than those they had brought with them they would have rendered the palace uninhabitable.

The Grand Duke, General Voranzoff, and the governor of the town, the chief of the merchants, with several officers, had collected to determine upon various proposals.

'Gentlemen,' said the Grand Duke, 'you know our situation exactly. I have the firm hope that we shall be able to hold out until the arrival of the Yakutsk troops. We shall then be able to drive off these barbarian hordes, and it will not be my fault if

they do not pay dearly for this invasion of the Muscovite territory.'

'Your Highness knows that all the population of Irkutsk may be relied on,' said General Voranzoff.

'Yes, General,' replied the Grand Duke, 'and I do justice to their patriotism. Thanks to God, they have not yet been subjected to the horrors of epidemic and famine, and I have reason to hope they will escape them; but I cannot admire their courage on the ramparts enough. You hear my words, Sir Merchant, and I beg you to repeat such to them.'

'I thank your Highness in the name of the town,' answered the merchant chief. 'May I ask you what is the most distant date when we may expect the relieving army?'

'Six days at most, sir,' replied the Grand Duke. 'A brave and clever messenger managed this morning to get into the town, and he told me that fifty thousand Russians, under General Kisselef, are advancing by forced marches. Two days ago, they were on the banks of the Lena, at Kirensk, and now neither frost nor snow will keep them back. Fifty thousand good men, taking the Tartars on the flank, will soon set us free.'

'I will add,' said the chief of the merchants, 'that we will be ready to execute your orders any day that your Highness may command a sortie.'

'Good, sir,' replied the Grand Duke. 'Wait till the heads of the relieving columns appear on the heights, and we will speedily crush these invaders.'

Then turning to General Voranzoff—

'To-morrow,' said he, 'we will visit the works on the right bank. Ice is drifting down the Augara, which will not be long in freezing,

and in that case the Tartars might perhaps cross.'

'Will your Highness allow me to make an observation?' said the chief of the merchants.

'Do so, sir.'

'I have more than once seen the temperature fall to thirty and forty degrees below zero, and the Angara has still carried down drifting ice without entirely freezing. This is no doubt owing to the swiftness of its current. If therefore the Tartars have no other means of crossing the river, I can assure your Highness that they will not enter Irkutsk in that way.'

The governor-general confirmed this assertion.

'It is a fortunate circumstance,' responded the Grand Duke. 'Nevertheless, we must hold ourselves ready for any emergency.'

He then, turning towards the head of the police, asked, 'Have you nothing to say to me, sir?'

'I have to make known to your Highness,' answered the head of police, 'a petition which is addressed to you through me.'

'Addressed by—'

'By the Siberian exiles, who, as your Highness knows, are in the town to the number of five hundred.'

The political exiles distributed over the province had been collected in Irkutsk from the beginning of the invasion. They had obeyed the order to rally in the town, and leave the villages where they exercised their different professions, some doctors, some professors, either at the Gymnasium, or at the Japanese School, or at the School of Navigation. The Grand Duke, trusting like the Czar in their patriotism, had armed them, and they had thoroughly proved their bravery.

'What do the exiles ask?' said the Grand Duke.

'They ask the consent of your Highness,' answered the head of police, 'to their forming a special corps, and being placed in the front of the first sortie.'

'Yes,' replied the Grand Duke, with an emotion which he did not seek to hide, 'these exiles are Russians, and it is their right to fight for their country.'

'I believe I may assure your Highness,' said the governor-general, 'that you will not have any better soldiers.'

'But they must have a chief,' said the Grand Duke; 'who will he be?'

'They wish to recommend to your Highness,' said the head of police, 'one of their number, who has distinguished himself on several occasions.'

'Is he a Russian?'

'Yes, a Russian from the Baltic provinces.'

'His name—'

'Is Warsili Fedor.'

This exile was Nadia's father.

Warsili Fedor, as we have already said, followed his profession of a medical man in Irkutsk. He was clever and charitable, and also possessed the greatest courage and most sincere patriotism. All the time which he did not devote to the sick he employed in organising the defence. It was he who had united his companions in exile in the common cause. The exiles, till then mingled with the population, had behaved in such a way as to draw on themselves the attention of the Grand Duke. In several sorties they had paid with their blood their debt to holy Russia—holy as they believe, and adored by her children. Warsili Fedor had behaved heroically; his name had been mentioned several times, but he never asked either thanks or favours, and when the exiles of Irkutsk thought of forming themselves

into a special corps, he was ignorant of their having any intention of choosing him for their captain.

When the head of police mentioned this name, the Grand Duke answered that it was not unknown to him.

'Indeed,' remarked General Voranzoff, 'Warsili Fedor is a man of worth and courage. His influence over his companions has always been very great.'

'How long has he been at Irkutsk?' asked the Grand Duke.

'For two years.'

'And his conduct—'

'His conduct,' answered the head of police, 'is that of a man obedient to the special laws which govern him.'

'General,' said the Grand Duke, 'General, be good enough to present him to me immediately.'

The orders of the Grand Duke were obeyed, and before half an hour had passed Warsili Fedor was introduced to his presence.

He was a man of forty years or more, tall, of a stern and sad countenance. One felt that his whole life was summed up in a single word—strife—and that he had striven and suffered. His features bore a marked resemblance to those of his daughter, Nadia Fedor.

This Tartar invasion had severely wounded him in his tenderest affections, and ruined the hope of the father, exiled eight thousand versts from his native town. A letter had apprised him of the death of his wife, and at the same time of the departure of his daughter, who had obtained from the government an authorisation to join him at Irkutsk.

Nadia must have left Riga on the 10th of July. The invasion had begun on the 15th of July; if at that time Nadia had passed the frontier, what could have become of her in the midst of the

invaders? The anxiety of the unhappy father may be supposed when, from that time, he had no further news of his daughter.

Warsili Fedor entered the presence of the Grand Duke, bowed, and waited to be questioned.

'Warsili Fedor,' said the Grand Duke, 'your companions in exile have asked to be allowed to form a select corps. They are not ignorant that in this corps they must make up their minds to be killed to the last man?'

'They are not ignorant of it,' replied Fedor.

'They wish to have you for their captain.'

'I, your Highness?'

'Do you consent to be placed at their head?'

'Yes, if it is for the good of Russia.'

'Captain Fedor,' said the Grand Duke, 'you are no longer an exile.'

'Thanks, your Highness; but can I command those who are so still?'

'They are so no longer!'

The brother of the Czar had granted a pardon to all his companions in exile, now his companions in arms.

Warsili Fedor wrung, with emotion, the hand which the Grand Duke held out to him, and retired.

The latter, then turning to his officers—

'The Czar will not refuse to ratify that pardon,' said he, smiling; 'we need heroes to defend the capital of Siberia, and I have just made some.'

This pardon, so generously accorded to the exiles of Irkutsk, was indeed an act of real justice and sound policy.

It was now night. Through the windows of the palace burned the fires of the Tartar camp, flickering beyond the Angara.

Down the river drifted numerous blocks of ice, some of which stuck on the piles of the old bridges; others were swept along by the current with great rapidity. It was evident, as the merchant had observed, that it would be very difficult for the Augara to freeze all over. The defenders of Irkutsk had not to dread being attacked on that side.

Ten o'clock had just struck. The Grand Duke was about to dismiss his officers and retire to his own apartments, when a tumult was heard outside the palace.

Almost immediately the door was thrown open, an aide-de-camp appeared, and advancing towards the Grand Duke—

'Your Highness,' said he, 'a courier from the Czar!'

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CZAR'S COURIER.

ALL the members of the council simultaneously started forward. A courier from the Czar arrived in Irkutsk! Had these officers for a moment considered the improbability of this fact, they would certainly not have credited what they heard.

The Grand Duke advanced quickly to his aide-de-camp.

'This courier!' he exclaimed.

A man entered. He appeared exhausted with fatigue. He had on the dress of a Siberian peasant, worn into tatters, and exhibiting several shot-holes. A Muscovite cap was on his head. His face was disfigured by a recently healed scar. The man had evidently had a long and painful journey, his shoes being in a state which showed that he had been obliged to make part of it on foot.

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'His Highness the Grand Duke?' he said, as he entered.

The Grand Duke went up to him.

'You are a courier from the Czar?' he asked.

'Yes, your Highness.'

'You come—'

'From Moscow.'

'You left Moscow—'

'On the 15th of July.'

'Your name?'

'Michael Strogoff.'

It was Ivan Ogareff. He had taken the designation of the man whom he believed that he had rendered powerless. Neither the Grand Duke nor any one knew him in Irkutsk, and he had not even to disguise his features. As he was in a position to prove his pretended identity, no one could have any reason for doubting him. He came, therefore, sustained by his iron will, to hasten by treason and assassination the great object of the invasion.

After Ogareff had replied, the Grand Duke signed all his officers to withdraw.

He and the false Michael Strogoff remained alone in the saloon.

The Grand Duke looked at Ivan Ogareff for some moments with extreme attention. Then said he, 'On the 15th July you were at Moscow?'

'Yes, your Highness; and on the night of the 14th I saw his Majesty the Czar at the New Palace.'

'Have you a letter from the Czar?'

'Here it is.'

And Ivan Ogareff handed to the Grand Duke the imperial letter, reduced to almost microscopic dimensions.

'Was the letter given you in this state?' asked the Grand Duke.

'No, your Highness, but I was obliged to tear the envelope, the

better to hide it from the Emir's soldiers.'

'Were you taken prisoner by the Tartars?'

'Yes, your Highness, I was their prisoner for several days,' answered Ogareff. 'Such was the reason that, having left Moscow on the 15th of July, as the date of that letter shows, I only reached Irkutsk on the 2d of October, after travelling seventy-nine days.'

The Grand Duke took the letter. He unfolded it and recognised the Czar's signature, preceded by the decisive formula, written by his brother's hand. There was no possible doubt of the authenticity of this letter, nor of the identity of the courier. Though Ogareff's countenance had at first inspired the Grand Duke with some distrust, he let nothing of it appear, and it soon vanished.

The Grand Duke remained for a few minutes without speaking. He read the letter slowly, so as to take in its meaning fully.

'Michael Strogoff, do you know the contents of this letter?' he asked.

'Yes, your Highness. I might have been obliged to destroy it, to prevent its falling into the hands of the Tartars; and should such have been the case, I wished to be able to bring the contents of it to your Highness.'

'You know that this letter enjoins us all to die rather than give up the town?'

'I know it.'

'You know also that it informs me of the movements of the troops which have combined to stop the invasion?'

'Yes, your Highness; but these movements have not succeeded.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean that Ichim, Omsk, Tomsk, to speak only of the more important towns of the two Siberias, have been successively occu-

pied by the soldiers of Feofar-Khan.'

'But there has been fighting! Have not our Cossacks met the Tartars?'

'Several times, your Highness.'

'And they were repulsed?'

'They were not in sufficient force to oppose the enemy.'

'Where did the encounters of which you speak take place?'

'At Kolyvan, at Tomsk—'

Until now, Ogareff had only spoken the truth, but, in the hope of troubling the defenders of Irkutsk by exaggerating the advantages gained by the Emir's troops, he added,

'And a third time before Krasnoïarsk.'

'And what of this last engagement?' asked the Grand Duke, through whose compressed lips the words could scarcely pass.

'It was more than an engagement, your Highness,' answered Ogareff; 'it was a battle.'

'A battle?'

'Twenty thousand Russians, from the frontier provinces and the government of Tobolsk, engaged with a hundred and fifty thousand Tartars, and, notwithstanding their courage, were overwhelmed.'

'You lie!' exclaimed the Grand Duke, endeavouring in vain to curb his passion.

'I speak the truth, your Highness,' replied Ivan Ogareff coldly. 'I was present at the battle of Krasnoïarsk, and it was there I was made prisoner.'

The Grand Duke grew calmer, and by a significant gesture he gave Ogareff to understand that he did not doubt his veracity.

'What day did this battle of Krasnoïarsk take place?' he asked.

'On the 2d of September.'

'And now all the Tartar troops are concentrated around Irkutsk?'

'All.'

'And you estimate them—'

'At about four hundred thousand men.'

Another exaggeration of Ogareff's in the estimate of the Tartar armies, with the same object as before in view.

'And I must not expect any help from the west provinces?' asked the Grand Duke.

'None, your Highness, at any rate before the end of the winter.'

'Well, hear this, Michael Strogoff. Though I must expect no help either from the east or from the west, even were these barbarians six hundred thousand strong, I will never give up Irkutsk!'

Ogareff's evil eye slightly contracted. The traitor thought to himself that the brother of the Czar did not reckon the result of treason.

The Grand Duke, who was of a nervous temperament, had great difficulty in keeping calm whilst hearing this disastrous news. He walked to and fro in the room, under the gaze of Ogareff, who eyed him as a victim reserved for his vengeance. He stopped at the windows, he looked forth at the fires in the Tartar camp, he listened to the various noises which, for the most part, were occasioned by the crashing of the ice-blocks drifting down the Angara.

A quarter of an hour passed without his putting any more questions. Then taking up the letter, he re-read a passage, and said,

'You know, Michael Strogoff, that in this letter I am warned of a traitor, of whom I must beware.'

'Yes, your Highness.'

'He will try to enter Irkutsk in disguise, gain my confidence, and when the time comes betray the town to the Tartars.'

'I know all that, your Highness, and I know also that Ivan Ogareff has sworn to revenge him-

self personally on the Czar's brother.'

'Why?'

'It is said that the officer in question was condemned by the Grand Duke to a humiliating degradation.'

'Yes—I remember. But it is a proof that the villain, who could afterwards serve against his country and head an invasion of barbarians, deserved it.'

'His Majesty the Czar,' said Ogareff, 'was particularly anxious that you should be warned of the criminal projects of Ivan Ogareff against your person.'

'Yes; of that the letter informs me.'

'And his Majesty himself spoke to me of it, telling me that in my journey across Siberia I was above all things to beware of the traitor.'

'Did you meet with him?'

'Yes, your Highness, after the battle of Krasnoïarsk. If he had only guessed that I was the bearer of a letter addressed to your Highness, in which his plans were revealed, I should not have got off so easily.'

'No; you would have been lost,' replied the Grand Duke. 'And how did you manage to escape?'

'By throwing myself into the Irtych.'

'And how did you enter Irkutsk?'

'Under cover of a sortie, which was made this evening to repulse a Tartar detachment. I mingled with the defenders of the town, made myself known, and was immediately conducted before your Highness.'

'Good, Michael Strogoff,' answered the Grand Duke. 'You have shown courage and zeal in your difficult mission. I will not forget you. Have you any favour to ask of me?'

'None; unless it is to be al-

lowed to fight at the side of your Highness,' replied Ogareff.

'So be it, Strogoff. I attach you from to-day to my person, and you shall be lodged in the palace.'

'And if, according to his intention, Ivan Ogareff should present himself to your Highness under a false name—'

'We will unmask him, thanks to you, who know him, and I will make him die under the knout. Go!'

Ivan Ogareff gave a military salute, not forgetting that he was captain of the corps of couriers of the Czar, and retired.

Ogareff had so far played his unworthy part with success. The Grand Duke's full and entire confidence had been accorded him. He could now betray it whenever it suited him. He would even inhabit the palace. He would be in the secret of all the operations for the defence of the town. He thus held the situation in his hand, as it were. No one in Irkutsk knew him, no one could snatch off his mask. He resolved therefore to set to work without delay.

Indeed, time pressed. The town must be given up before the arrival of the Russians from the north and east, and that was only a question of a few days. The Tartars once masters of Irkutsk, it would not be easy to take it again from them. At any rate, even if they were obliged to abandon it later, they would not do so before they had utterly destroyed it, and before the head of the Grand Duke had rolled at the feet of Feofar-Khan.

Ivan Ogareff, having every facility for seeing, observing, and acting, occupied himself the next day with visiting the ramparts. He was everywhere received with cordial congratulations from officers, soldiers, and citizens. To them this courier from the Czar

was a link which connected them with the empire.

Ogareff recounted, with an assurance which never failed, numerous fictitious events of his journey. Then, with the cunning for which he was noted, without dwelling too much on it at first, he spoke of the gravity of the situation, exaggerating the success of the Tartars and the numbers of the barbarian forces, as he had when speaking to the Grand Duke. According to him, the expected succour would be insufficient, if ever they arrived at all, and it was to be feared that a battle fought under the walls of Irkutsk would be as fatal as the battles of Kolyvan, Tomsk, and Krasnoïarsk.

Ogareff was not too free in these insinuations. He wished to allow them to sink gradually into the minds of the defenders of Irkutsk. He pretended only to answer with reluctance when much pressed with questions. He always added that they must fight to the last man, and blow up the town rather than yield!

These false statements would have done more harm had it been possible; but the garrison and the population of Irkutsk were too patriotic to let themselves be moved. Of all the soldiers and citizens shut up in this town, isolated at the extremity of the Asiatic world, not one dreamed of even speaking of a capitulation. The contempt of the Russians for these barbarians was boundless.

No one suspected the odious part played by Ivan Ogareff; no one guessed that the pretended courier of the Czar was a traitor. It occurred very naturally that, on his arrival in Irkutsk, a frequent intercourse was established between Ogareff and one of the bravest defenders of the town, Warsili Fedor. We know what

anxiety this unhappy father suffered. If his daughter, Nadia Fedor, had left Russia on the date fixed by the last letter he had received from Riga, what had become of her? Was she still trying to cross the invaded provinces, or had she long since been taken prisoner? The only alleviation to Warsili Fedor's anxiety was when an opportunity was afforded him of engaging in battle with the Tartars—opportunities which came too seldom for his taste.

When, therefore, Warsili Fedor heard of the unexpected arrival of a courier from the Czar, he had a hope that he might obtain information from him of his daughter. It was probably but a chimerical hope, but he dwelt upon it. Had not this courier been himself a prisoner, as perhaps Nadia now was?

Warsili Fedor sought out Ogareff, who seized the opportunity of forming an intimacy with the captain. Did the renegade expect to turn this circumstance to account? Did he judge all men by himself? Did he believe that a Russian, even though a political exile, could be base enough to betray his country?

However that might be, Ogareff replied with cleverly-feigned warmth to the advances made to him by Nadia's father. The very evening the pretended courier arrived, Warsili Fedor went to the governor-general's palace, and acquainted Ogareff with the circumstances under which his daughter must have left European Russia—told him all his uneasiness about her.

Ivan Ogareff did not know Nadia, although he had met her at Ichim on the day she was there with Michael Strogoff; but then he had not paid more attention to her than to the two reporters, who at the same time were in the

post-house; he therefore could give Warsili Fedor no news of his daughter.

'But at what time,' asked Ogareff, 'must your daughter have left the Russian territory?'

'About the same time that you did,' replied Warsili Fedor.

'I left Moscow on the 15th July.'

'Nadia must also have quitted Moscow at that time. Her letter told me so expressly.'

'She was in Moscow on the 15th of July?' asked Ogareff.

'Yes, certainly, by that date.'

'Well?' answered Ogareff.

Then he continued:

'But no; I am mistaken. I was confusing dates. Unfortunately it is too probable that your daughter must have passed the frontier, and you can only have one hope—that she stopped on learning the news of the Tartar invasion.'

The father's head fell. He knew Nadia, and he knew too well that nothing would have prevented her from setting out.

Ivan Ogareff had just committed gratuitously an act of real cruelty. With a word he might have reassured Fedor. Although Nadia had passed the frontier under circumstances with which we are acquainted, Warsili Fedor, by comparing the date on which his daughter would have been at Nijni-Novgorod, and the date of the proclamation which forbade any one to leave it, would no doubt have concluded thus: that Nadia had not been exposed to the dangers of the invasion, and that she was still, in spite of herself, in the European territory of the empire.

Ivan Ogareff, obedient to his nature—that of a man who was never touched by the sufferings of others—might have said that word. He did not say it.

Warsili Fedor retired with his heart broken. In that interview his last hope was crushed.

During the two following days, the 3d and 4th of October, the Grand Duke often spoke to the pretended Michael Strogoff, and made him repeat all that he had heard in the imperial cabinet of the New Palace. Ogareff, prepared for all these questions, replied without the least hesitation. He intentionally did not conceal that the Czar's Government had been utterly surprised by the invasion; that the insurrection had been prepared in the greatest possible secrecy; that the Tartars were already masters of the line of the Obi when the news reached Moscow; and lastly, that none of the necessary preparations were completed in the Russian provinces for sending into Siberia the troops requisite for repulsing the invaders.

Ivan Ogareff, being entirely free in his movements, began to study Irkutsk, the state of its fortifications, their weak points, so as to profit subsequently by his observations, in the event of being prevented by some occurrence from consummating his act of treason. He examined particularly the Bolchaïa gate, the one he wished to deliver up.

Twice in the evening he came upon the glacis of this gate. He walked up and down, without fear of being discovered by the besiegers, whose nearest posts were at least a mile from the ramparts. He knew, therefore, that he was exposed to no danger

from them, and he fancied that he was recognised by no one, till he caught sight of a shadow gliding along at the foot of the earthworks.

Sangarre had come, at the risk of her life, for the purpose of endeavouring to put herself into communication with Ivan Ogareff.

For two days the besieged had enjoyed a tranquillity to which the Tartars had not accustomed them since the commencement of the investment.

This was by Ogareff's orders. Feofar-Khan's lieutenant wished that all attempts to take the town by force should be suspended. Since, therefore, his arrival in Irkutsk, the guns had been silent. Perhaps also—at least, so he hoped—the watchfulness of the besieged would relax. At any rate, several thousand Tartars were kept in readiness at the outposts to attack the gate, deserted, as Ogareff hoped it would be, by its defenders, whenever he should summon the besiegers to the assault.

This he could not now delay in doing. All must be over by the time that the Russian troops should come in sight of Irkutsk. Ogareff's arrangements were made, and on this evening a note fell from the top of the earthworks into Sangarre's hands.

On the next day—that is to say, during the hours of darkness, from the 5th to the 6th of October, at two o'clock in the morning—Ivan Ogareff had resolved to deliver up Irkutsk.

(To be continued.)

TURKISH SOCIETY.

THE IFTAR.

SOCIETY in the sense in which we understand the term, the social and friendly intercourse between men and women, must be impossible in Turkey so long as the yashmak and the seclusion of Mussulman women continue in full force, and (in spite of the enthusiastic declarations of superficial travellers, that the regeneration of that unhappy country depends upon the speedy tearing off of the veil of her women) they must so continue for at least another generation, until education shall have gradually and safely prepared the way for the change; but society as it is understood amongst the harems of Stamboul, in the form of a perpetual and ceremonious interchange of visits, is carried out to quite an alarming extent—visits in person and visits by proxy; visits of polite inquiry and visits of inspection; visits of salutation, of congratulation, of condolence; visits on every festive occasion, public, private, and religious; and especially visits during the evenings of the months of Ramazan, the only period of the year in which Turkish women are accustomed to go out on foot into the streets at night. They avail themselves freely of the privilege. At that time, cloaked and 'yashmaked' groups, preceded by an 'aiwass' (messenger) carrying a paper lantern, flit about the usually silent streets and lanes of the Mussulman city; some are on the way to make their evening 'namaz' at the mosque; others to

join in the festivities of a friendly neighbouring harem; all prepared to profit to the utmost by the liberty permitted by the season, and to enjoy the hours of festivity as a counterbalance to the hours of fasting.

It is well known that the month of Ramazan is kept by all good Mussulmans as a period of the strictest fast during the day, from sunrise to sunset; they abstain not only from food of any kind whatever, but even from liquids, taking no drop of water during that time; they suspend also the enjoyment of tobacco, which is scarcely less indispensable to their daily life. As a compensation for these rigorous privations, the night is partly devoted to feasting. For the rich and idle, who pass in sleep the greater part of their days of penitence, the suffering is considerably lessened; but for the poorer classes, for workmen and servants, the Ramazan, when it falls during the long days of the hot summer months, is cruelly severe; and it is to be remarked that precisely these hard-working and labouring 'faithful' are those who hold the most strictly to their religious observances. Aged people and children are not required to keep the fast of Ramazan; and women in delicate health are also freed from the obligation for the time, but they are expected to make up the required number of penitential days before its recurrence in the ensuing year; and the ill-advised

visitor who may risk a visit to a harem as that season is drawing near is sure to find several of the inmates undergoing their days of 'pehrip' (abstinence), and consequently pale, weary, and slightly out of humour.

The fifteenth day of Ramazan, on which devout Mahometans go in crowds to salute the 'hirka schérif' (the holy jacket) and other relics of their Prophet, is a sort of Mid-Lent; the fast of the daylight hours is in no wise relaxed, but the evening is regarded as a time of special rejoicing, for which invitations to strangers are reserved. It is a time for family gatherings also. Married sons and daughters revisit their parents' homes, bringing their children to kiss the hand of the 'Buyuk Baba Effendi' and of the 'Hanum Niné' (the lady mother); brothers and sisters meet and exchange complimentary greetings; inferiors pay visits of respect; and the men of the family, and relatives who are not admitted within the harem, send polite messages of inquiry after the health of the elder ladies and of such as are above themselves in rank. This interchange of visits and 'compliments of the season' takes place upon all the occasions set apart as festivals, and the etiquette which regulates them is minutely and rigorously observed by all well-ordered families.

'Iftar' is the name given during the Ramazan to the repast which breaks the abstinence of the day, and the exact moment of the setting of the sun is announced by cannon all over the city. It was formerly the custom to keep open house for the 'iftar' during the entire month; people came to dine without invitation; but the gradual changes of custom, and especially the impoverishment of the country, have forced upon

householders the necessity for withholding this too lavish hospitality, which is now only maintained in the case of the poor. Every evening crowds of mendicants assemble before the gates of the palaces and of the richer houses; they are served in turn (a certain number at a time) to an ample meal of pillaf and stewed meat and vegetables, and each individual on leaving receives a silver coin and frequently some new article of dress.

In the highest classes of Ottoman society the invitation to the 'iftar' is an obligatory politeness, and the local papers never fail to announce the fact, interesting only to local readers, that the ambassador of one or other of the Powers has made the 'iftar' of the preceding evening with the Grand Vizier. The labours of politeness which devolve on this high functionary during the month are arduous; the etiquette of his invitations is most strictly regulated, and each evening a number of such as are entitled to the attention surround his board in order, according to rank and precedence, from the highest officer and minister of state down to the simple clerk in the offices of the Porta.

Having accepted an invitation to take the 'iftar' of the fifteenth day of Ramazan with the ladies of the family of A—— Pasha, in Stamboul, I paid them a visit in the course of the preceding week in order to ascertain the precise date of the festival; Europeans being subject to mistakes of calculation, owing to the Oriental custom of reckoning the day from sunset.

I found that Djémilé Khanum, the first wife of the Pasha, had gone to the neighbouring mosque to hear a celebrated preacher. Turkish women are in the habit of attending the Friday prayers

and sermons throughout the year in any of the mosques of the city, but during the month of Ramadan, when these edifices are crowded, certain of them are reserved for the especial use of the harems; the list is published in advance, and the Nour' Osmanieh, the large and beautiful building standing near an entrance to the bazaars, is one of those most frequently selected for the devotions of the veiled worshippers. In great and wealthy houses the Ramadan prayers are recited by the imaum of the establishment in a large central hall of the 'kouak,' the harem or female portion of the family taking part in the ceremony from behind grated screens placed there for the occasion.

Zeheira Khanum, the younger wife of the Pasha, was within on the occasion of my visit, very busy with her household cares and surrounded by a tribe of children; but she came forward to greet me with great cordiality, and was especially anxious that there should be no mistake as to the time for which their invitation had been made.

On the appointed day, no carriage being procurable on account of the festival, I left Pera on foot, accompanied by a friend; we hastened through the badly-paved streets of Stamboul, dreading at each moment to hear the boom of the sunset gun before reaching the 'kouak.' To be behind time under the circumstances would be a more than ordinary failure in good manners; but by great exertion we gained the large gateway while still some rays of sunshine lingered in the sky, and, quickly admitted by the porter—a warlike-looking individual wearing a monstrous black turban—crossed the courtyard, and tapped at a modest wooden door sheltered from the outer court

by a rough screen. The door of the harem was opened by a tall negress, whose shining ebony features gleamed with smiles, and some young slaves advancing, assisted us up the broad easy staircase in a manner intended to show especial deference and respect. On occasions of ceremony it is the custom for the slaves to place themselves one on each side of the new arrival, and, thus carefully supported from the elbow, the Mussulman lady allows herself to be slowly and laboriously escorted upwards. To a 'Frank' this constrained movement is, to say the least of it, unpleasant; but as a mark of great attention it has to be endured, and the slight infliction is soon ended, the reception-rooms of the family being rarely higher than the first floor.

A slave raising a heavy curtain of camel's hair embroidered with gold, we find Zeheira Khanum waiting to bid us welcome, and to assist a hurried change of dress; for the sunset signal is now rolling over Stamboul from each of its numerous batteries, the guests and children are already seated spoon in hand, a slim Circassian girl waits to pour water over the hands from a ewer of richly ornamented silver, while another holds the soft towel embroidered with gold thread which we take with us to the table, and in a few minutes we are in the places of honour reserved for the strange ladies.

Two tables had been arranged on the matting of the 'sofa' (the central hall). They are formed of disks of burnished brass, about four feet in diameter, placed on a low stool; beneath this is spread a large square, which is often of silk woven with gold threads, and soft cushions are laid around. In some rich houses these dining-

disks, called 'tepeşsy,' are made of solid silver.

An Eastern woman taking her place at the 'tepeşsy' (scarcely a foot and a half above the ground) sinks upon her cushion in the most graceful manner imaginable, but the feat is by no means so easy of accomplishment by a 'Frank.' It is necessary to be so placed as to leave the right arm free to reach with ease the dish placed in the centre of the table; you endeavour, perhaps, to kneel in an easy way, but the cushion is soft and yielding, and there is danger of an unexpected overbalance amongst the saucers of pickle and sweetmeat; you sit back, but your spoon makes vague and useless advances towards the distant soup-bowl; you turn sideways, to find that you are scarcely showing due politeness to the mistress of the house, upon whom you have deliberately turned your back. It is bewildering. At length a pitying 'calfa' brings forward a little stool, and with infinite precaution your feet are slipped beneath the low tray, and there they are condemned to remain, immovable, until the end of the repast, as an ill-advised movement might easily overturn the banquet. It is needless to expatiate on the torture which is sometimes thus silently endured, but it is undeniable that the ease of position conferred by prosaic tables and chairs more than counterbalances the picturesque effect and Oriental charm of crouching round a Turkish 'tepeşsy.' This method of dining almost on the ground and of eating with the fingers is rarely now adopted, all 'civilised' Oriental families taking kindly to our Western customs in this respect; but even the most Europeanised amongst them return, during the month of Ramazan, to the primitive habits of their ancestors,

which they regard as more orthodox.

Our dinner-table at A—— Pasha's was presided over by his sister-in-law, Besmè Hanum, an elderly woman, very amiable and attentive to her guests. I am placed beside her; my friend, the eldest daughter of the family, a niece, a young bride, the elder wife, and a Turkish visitor, complete the circle. Zeheira Khanum keeps order amongst the children at a second dinner-table which had been set up within a short distance.

There is no table-cloth, but everything is neatly arranged upon the polished metal. Before each guest is a piece of ordinary bread—a flap of unleavened dough slightly baked and looking like mottled leather—and two spoons, one of them in box or horn, and the other, more delicate, in tortoiseshell, the handle ornamented with coral and inlaid mother-of-pearl. Sometimes these spoons have a little crooked branch of coral at the tip to avert the evil eye. Each person is provided with a small ring-shaped cake called 'sémitt,' some pieces of which are always taken before the Ramazan dinner, as well as a small quantity of condiments, such as caviar, olives, salted and dried mutton, cheese, or pickle. At the table which I am describing these 'hors d'œuvre' were spread about in abundance, surrounding a handsome silver stand, holding covered cups filled with excellent lemonade, of which each guest partook; and then, the stand being removed, a stout negress deposited in its place with an air of triumph a large tureen filled with a delicate white soup.

The spoons are raised in expectation; it is Besmè Hanum who resolutely tucks up her right sleeve above the elbow, and, as mistress of the ceremonies, is the

first to dip into the tureen, murmuring the customary invitation 'bouyouroun,' at which all the spoons join company; and after a few minutes of silence well employed the soup is borne away, to make room for a turkey stuffed with rice, currants, fir-nuts, and spices. Very little is taken from each dish, as their number and variety are infinite, but each one is tasted, and little excursions are made between whiles amongst the saucers—a pinch of salad from one, a preserved fruit from another, then a morsel torn as delicately as possible from the centre dish of fowl, taking in passing a dip into the curdled milk or a flavour of pickle or red pepper; then back again to the middle of the table, which exhibits probably by this time a mound of luscious pastry.

Vegetables form an important part of the Turkish culinary system; you may frequently count a dozen varieties at the same time, besides many herbs and plants, of which we have no knowledge on our Western tables. They use, according to the season, marsh-mallow leaves, cucumbers, vine leaves, cabbage, or even the half-open bud of the gourd or melon, to form the 'dolmas' stuffed with rice and chopped meat, which never fail to make their appearance at every repast.

In serving a dinner, it is considered the right thing to alternate the sweet and the savoury; thus our turkey is followed by 'baclawa,' a rich pastry composed of flour, butter, and pounded almonds soaked in honey; after this the 'tcheurek'—puff paste filled with cheese and herbs; a dish of fried fish yields the place of honour to the 'ekruék-kadaif,' or thin pancakes interlarded with lumps of clotted cream; and to this again succeeds a mound of artichokes dressed in oil. The

'aschourah,' a sweet porridge which makes its appearance upon most festive occasions, deserves a few words of explanation, as this preparation has a legendary origin. 'Aschourah' is composed of Indian wheat, barley, wheat, dried raisins, nuts, almonds, walnuts, pistachio nuts, and even dry Windsor and haricot beans, boiled and sweetened; the greater the variety and incongruity of the ingredients the better the 'aschourah,' for it is a remembrance, says the legend, of Noah's residence in the Ark, 'into which the water must have penetrated at length, and produced an unexpected soup amongst the remnants of his dry stores.' 'Aschourah' is made in great quantities in all respectable houses during the first ten days of the month Mouharem (the first month of the year), to be sent about to friends and to be liberally distributed to the poor; at this period, any persons presenting themselves at the door of a 'kouak' receive without question a bowl of 'aschourah' in remembrance of the tragical deaths of Hassan and Hossein, grandsons of the Prophet.

Our 'iftar' was concluded by sherbet accompanying the pillof, and then each guest rose with little ceremony, to wash her hands over the handsome silver basins held by the attendant slaves, or at the marble fountain let into the wall of the 'sofa.'

The custom of eating with the fingers, very repugnant though it may be to our sense of cleanliness, is not so repulsive as might be imagined in the case of well-educated Turkish ladies, whose hands are invariably small and delicate. Politeness forbids excursions into a neighbour's field of labour; each takes from the portion of the dish placed in the front; and it would be difficult to realise, without

witnessing the feat, the dexterity with which the most dangerous-looking morsels travel from the centre of the table to the mouth, sustained by two fingers and the thumb of the right hand aided by a piece of the flat bread, without marking its passage across the board; the left hand is never used.

We follow *Besmè Hanum* into the reception-room of the harem, and rest at length upon a couch of French manufacture; the Turkish ladies place themselves according to their age and taste, the elders very much at their ease upon the broad divan; whilst the younger *khanums*, anxious to give proof of 'civilisation,' endure the infliction of upright chairs. While the coffee is being served in the tiny porcelain cups, held in 'zarfs' of silver filigree, we have leisure to note the appearance and dress of our fair neighbours. The eldest daughter of the Pasha, a young wife and mother, is seated opposite to us, holding her fat rosy-cheeked baby boy upon her lap. This young *khanum* is very pretty, and has exquisite little hands, but her figure is short and already alarmingly stout. Her cousin, seated beside her, has no beauty of feature, but the vivacity of her countenance and the sparkle of her fine dark eyes cause you to forget the irregularity in the outline of the face. She wears an aigrette coquettishly arranged in her headdress, with a French *paletot* in black cloth, which claims to make its wearer appear quite 'à la franca;' for she disdains the easy grace which should be natural to her, and sits perfectly upright upon the straight-backed chair, quite 'comme il faut,' and evidently most uncomfortable. On the next chair sits the young bride, equally 'à la franca,' and consequently ill at ease; she is

a tall and fine blonde, with an exquisite complexion and a decidedly lady-like appearance; her clear blue eyes have a soft good-tempered expression, and the rich masses of her bright chestnut hair are well seen beneath a small velvet toque trimmed with a bird of paradise; her 'autary' and 'schalwars' are of pale-green silk. The ladies of the house are very simply attired in printed cottons, and the little boys wear quilted cotton pelisses, clean, warm, and inelegant. These children, four or five in number, wander about softly, for little Turkish children are brought up to habits of submission; they are, in fact, almost too quiet.

After the coffee the ladies begin to smoke; *Besmè Hanum* is provided with a *tchibouk* of formidable dimensions, the younger ladies are satisfied with cigarettes, of which immense numbers are consumed in the harems.

The conversation, sustained with great difficulty with our imperfect Turkish, begins quickly to flag: the subject of the weather is soon exhausted; the bad state of the streets, the distance from Pera, the hope of a fine summer, are not subjects adapted to lengthened discussion; we praise the children, but that opening also is soon worked out. What *can* one find to converse about with women, however good and amiable they may be, who scarcely ever leave the circle of their home duties, who never travel, do not read, have seen nothing, know nothing of all that interests us most? Shall we talk of housekeeping and servants—the last feeble resource of a feminine mind in despair of a subject? It is impossible—households and servitude with them are on such a strangely different footing.

Suddenly *Sabiha*, a pretty little girl about ten years old, has the

bright idea of exhibiting her work—slippers which she is embroidering for the 'Baba Effendi.' Our loudly expressed admiration encourages the young beys of four and five to show their learning also; they bring in books of geography, some pictures of natural history, and, finally, a Turkish edition of *Robinson Crusoe*! Upon this we make friends immediately; the children, charmed to discover that their 'Djuma' (Friday) is a mutual acquaintance, begin to chatter over their pictures and to relate with great animation a recent visit to a menagerie, to which their father had taken them. The witty niece, joining them in the conversation, gives an amusing account of her interview with a giraffe newly arrived, who saw for the first time a woman veiled in white, declaring that visitor and visited were equally alarmed at the unusual apparition.

In the midst of our conversation a clapping of hands is heard from behind the camel's-hair curtain which falls before the doorway. It is the Pasha who is coming. A slave enters quickly and begs the bride to withdraw—she is not a near relation, and the Pasha may not see her unveiled face: she consequently rises and retires with a slow and majestic step, whilst the aged sister-in-law folds about her head a muslin scarf to represent a yashmak: the two wives, the daughter, and the niece remain, but all rise respectfully as the master of the house enters the room.

The visit of A—— Pasha, a cultivated man, speaking with facility several languages, formed an agreeable change in the programme of the evening; he conversed with all in turn. To ourselves he expressed the pleasure with which he remembered a somewhat lengthened stay in Eng-

land, some years previously, and professed a very deep appreciation of roast beef and plum pudding; with the ladies of his family he discussed the news of the neighbourhood, and entered into a lively argument with his witty niece on the subject of the name which should be given to some newly-born infant relative—a nephew's child I think it was; they finally agreed that it would not be inappropriate to call the baby 'Ramazan.' The conversation was in full flow when suddenly the Pasha rose and darted from the room, leaving us rather wondering at this unceremonious exit, when a murmuring sound of voices from the direction of the staircase explained it—some fresh visitors had arrived for the harem, of whose presence the master of the house was supposed to be unconscious as he hurried through the central hall, where they waited to be divested of their 'yashmaks' and 'feredjés' by the attendants. They proved to be a Turkish lady and her young daughter, living in one of the opposite houses, who, in their quality of 'comshoular' (neighbours), had dropped in to spend an hour or two in friendly chat; for a good deal of friendliness and sociability is exercised between 'neighbours,' and though it was quietly hinted to us that in this instance the visitors were not so welcome as some others might have been, these khanums being considered 'fast,' yet, as neighbours, they must be received with politeness.

Coffee having been served to the new arrivals, the mother accepted a *tchibouk* and the daughter a cigarette, and, while slowly enjoying the perfumed tobacco, they put us through the usual examination as to our ages and social condition; and at length, that oft-worn subject exhausted, turned to their Mussulman friends,

entering on a lively recital of their last adventures and experiences at the promenade of the Sweet Waters.

Djémilé and Zeheira listened quietly, but without, as it seemed to us, much response. They know little or nothing of the world beyond their own family circle; with the exception of some rare occasion, such as the marriage of a relation, or other equally obligatory reason, they scarcely leave their home, living in great retirement; the chief excitements of the year being the periodical changes between town and country—the ‘kouak’ in Stamboul and the ‘yali’ on the Bosphorus,—with an occasional picnic party amongst themselves, when, with children and attendants, they wander to some favourite spot, and spend the long summer day in shady glades or near a rustic fountain.

Djémilé and Zeheira are the two wives—yes, alas! the two wives—of one husband. Many a hidden jealousy, many a bitter feeling must inevitably colour their otherwise tranquil lives, but they dwell together in apparent amity and concord; their tenderness and care are equal for all the children, and their lives are modest and blameless according to the customs of the old patriarchs, retained and transmitted by Mahomet. We recoil, and naturally so, from the idea of polygamy, and of multiplied household ties legalised by religion and by law, and English homes in the East have for years rejoiced in the conviction that no better or higher type of Christian family life could have been offered to the observation of Mussulman society than that which was most prominently before them in the family and domestic circle of the representative of our people, Sir Henry

Elliot, and that the gentle lesson of example has done much to influence and rectify the judgment of many a harem on the subject of our Christian homes; but it would be well indeed if all Christian families dwelling in the East could point to their rendering of our higher and purer standard of domestic obligations and duties as a model on which to reform the harems of Stamboul.

The supper to which we were shortly summoned was spread upon a table covered with a white cloth, and chairs had been provided. In the centre of the table was placed a silver epergne loaded with bonbons; around a profusion of apples, pears, dates, nuts, pomegranates, pistachio, and dried figs; there were plates also with a knife and a table-napkin for each person; at either end of the table a plate holding little squares of Broussa towelling, wetted, soaped, and neatly folded, offered a substitute for finger-glasses.

The supper passed off very gaily, our amiable entertainers vying with each other in showing every possible attention to the strangers, and, in defiance of excessive fatigue, we found ourselves obliged to return with them into the reception-room, when the *soirée* recommenced, varied shortly after by a barbaric concert which had been organised by means of some wandering musicians, who, passing through the streets, had been pressed into the service of the harem entertainment, and installed in a large room communicating with the ‘selamlık.’ A movable lattice screen drawn across the room permitted the women to be present without being themselves seen.

Turkish music is for the most part unmitigated suffering for European ears, but the khanums seemed to enjoy it intensely, and

it was quite late at night when we at length accomplished a retreat to the chamber prepared for us. Djémilé Khanum conducted us there, carefully inspected all the preparations made for our comfort, sprinkled lightly some drops of perfume upon the embroidered pillows, and left us with the most polite and friendly expressions of good-will.

An hour before the dawn the sound of a small drum beaten up and down the street gave notice to the Mussulmans that it was time for them to take their last meal before the rising of the sun; in many houses this last repast is almost as comprehensive as the dinner, though served in an informal manner. It is very customary to sit up all night, and to retire to rest as the hours of fasting draw near.

A nicely arranged breakfast was served for our benefit on the following morning; a great effort of politeness on the part of our hostesses, as it is usually exceedingly difficult for Christians in Stamboul, during Ramazan, to procure refreshment of any sort at other than the regulated hours. But in this hospitable harem all the ladies paid us little visits of farewell, and grouped themselves about the head of the staircase, offering the usual graceful compliments as we took leave, pleased with our visit and touched by the cordiality of our reception—a cor-

diality, I may observe, which this simple and hospitable people never fail to exercise towards those who meet them frankly with feelings of kindness and good-will.

This little family party which I have endeavoured to describe, the patriarchal usages and customs which are met with in simple middle-class respectable houses, are very far from realising our Western notions of the indolent luxury of the daily life of the harem; and yet this existence, monotonous and colourless without doubt, but simple and unpretending, is the mode of life of the great mass of the Mussulman population. I should remark, however, that polygamy is now the rare exception, and not as formerly the established custom; and that it is very unusual to meet with more than one wife in the home of a Turkish gentleman of moderate fortune. Lavish extravagance and culpable disorder may be found in the great houses, whose inmates are striving to introduce what they imagine to be the domestic usages of the centres of civilisation; but for each one of these families, whose follies and whose failings are known to the world, there are hundreds, thousands perhaps, of quiet sober respectable households amongst which still linger the primitive usages and traditions of the shepherd Turcomans, their nomad ancestors.

M. WALKER.

'ARMED FOR THE FRAY.'

'Arm'd for the fray!' How peerless
Face and form are to-night!
Dark eyes, proud and fearless,
Veiling their own sweet light.
Clustering roses climbing
Over those shoulders white;
Beauty and *mode* beguiling—
Which is the fairer sight?

'Arm'd' for the ranks of conquest—
Poverty, pride, and wealth,
Titles and bribes to honour
Worth—less dear than pelf.
'Arm'd' for the call of fashion;
'Arm'd' for the Season's war;
Only a buried passion
Whispers of something *more*.

'Arm'd for the fray!' sweet flushes
Lighting the pale proud cheek:
Ah, do a maiden's blushes
A maiden's truth bespeak?
Satin and showering laces,
Jewels in rippling hair:
Bear they no lingering traces
Of some dead past's despair?

* * * *

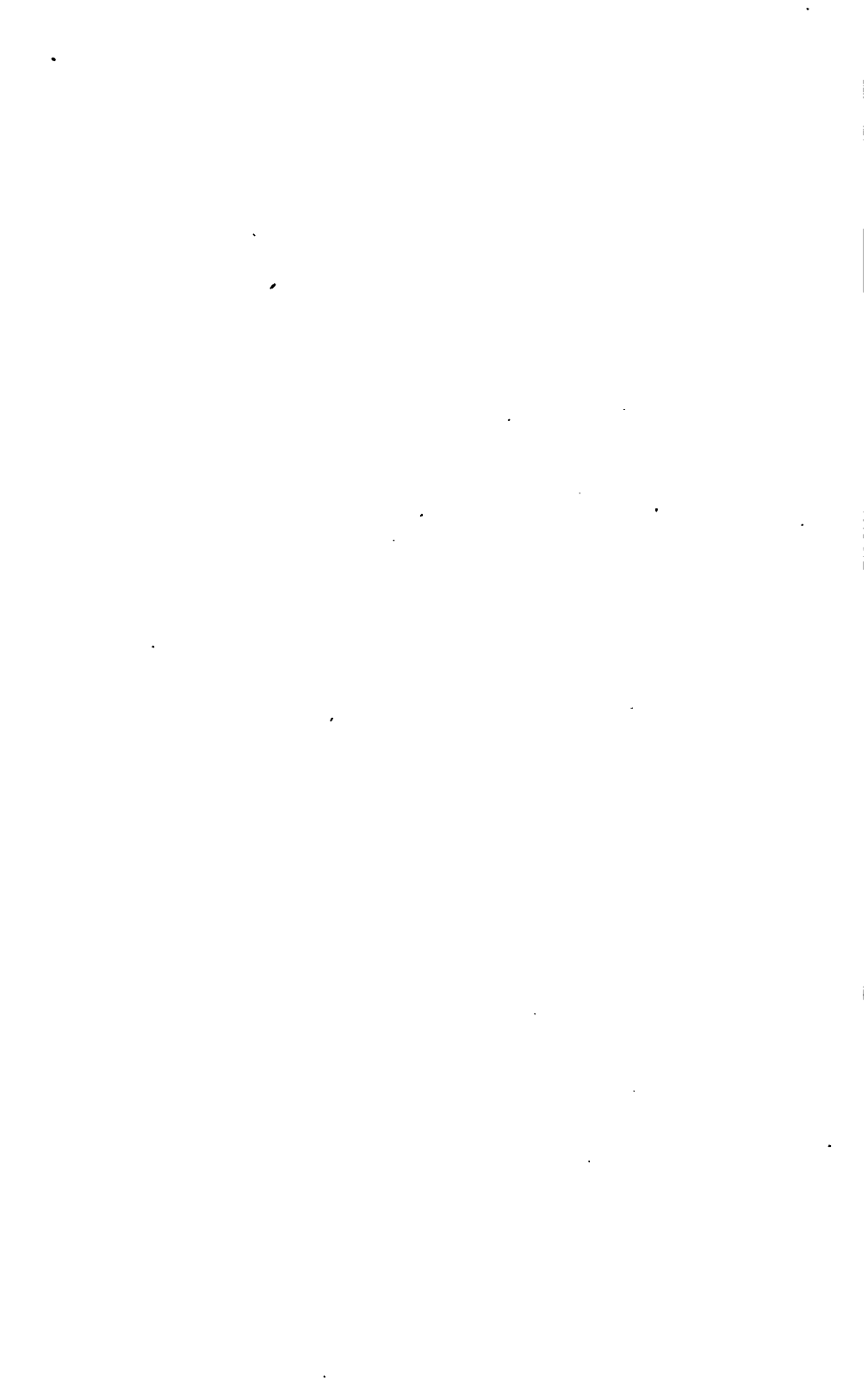
A shade on the brow so fearless,
A quiver of crimson lip:
The *belle* so proud and peerless
Has let her cold mask slip.
The touch of childish fingers,
The sight of a jewell'd band,
Wakens a thought that lingers
Long as the clinging hand.

Back to a time just measured
By a London Season's pain,
Back to a memory treasured
As nothing will be again,
Her swift thoughts fly, and flutter
In mazes of cheerless flight;
But the sigh her pale lips utter
Wafts it away from sight.

Fasten the jewell'd armlet,
Turn away sorrowing eyes;
Who has time in the Season
For troubled thoughts and sighs?
Carry yourself more proudly,
Because of the old dead past,
When, 'arm'd for the fray,' you fancied
That love and faith could last.



ARMED FOR THE FRAY.



PROUD MAISIE.

CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. MEREDITH AT HOME.

MRS. LEOPOLD MEREDITH lost no time in putting herself on a familiar footing with Eva and me. There is a practical sense of the shortness of human life which actuates foreigners, but which we English stupidly leave out of count in our methods of making our friendships—methods sure, perhaps, as the earth's rocks, but the resulting friendships are almost as slow in formation. We have such a superstitious dread of rushing into an intimacy from which we may afterwards prefer to withdraw, that we set to work in most cases as if life were everlasting, and deliberately let its best treasures slip through our cautious fingers. Quite otherwise with Sophie Meredith. After our second meeting we were friends with her; after our third, at home in her house; and on the fourth occasion she confided to us the whole history of her past life, and the particulars of her marriage.

It was late in the afternoon, we were alone with her in her boudoir, time and place enticing to confidential talk; not to mention tea and coffee, as fatal in their way to ladies' secrets as wine to those of men.

'Two years ago,' she related, 'I was with my parents in Franconia at Schloss Adlerberg. That is what you call a fine place. One day you too shall come there for to stay with us. We had then some young English gentlemen on a visit—my father was always so fond of the English nation, so

fond, you have no idea—and Count Marylski, that married my cousin Mathilde, he brought one of them—his friend he had known in London—that was my Leopold. Ah, there came quite a large party, to stalk the deer, you know.'

Briefly, of all this large party, Fräulein von Seckendorf had had eyes for the handsome English officer only; who, designedly or not, had already then, it appeared, made a deep impression on her heart.

'But he did not then propose,' she continued, 'for he had lately suffered heavy reverses, and lost much money—Englishmen *will* bet, you know—and just for that time he was absolutely ruined, all through some stupid horse that had fallen lame—not my Leopold's fault, of course. But he knew my father would forbid me to think of him as a husband, and he wished to spare me the pain of a struggle between love and duty.'

How far Sophie herself believed her Leopold's conduct to have been really dictated by these magnanimous motives I felt a little uncertain; but there was obviously something gratifying to her in holding them up for our admiration.

'So he went away. I was miserable and fell ill. But a whole long year passed, and not till last autumn did he hear through Count Marylski—who with Mathilde knew all about it—of the state of my health, and how wretched I was on his account. Then he could no longer bear it, found quickly some ex-

cuse for to present himself at Adlerberg, told me he loved me, and after that spoke to my father, who would listen to nothing at first, and my poor Leopold was wild with grief. But I went in and threw myself at my father's feet, and proved to him that I should die certain if Leopold went away; and that Leopold would go to India and have the yellow fever, and die too. So the good papa relented; for ah, he is soft-hearted underneath, as nobody knows but me. Leopold's debts were arranged in some manner, and it was agreed that he should sell his commission, and we should live for the present in Germany, where we are rich, as you see, merely on my dowry.'

'Last autumn,' thought I; 'that is, immediately after his parting with Hilda.'

Mr. Meredith had come in as she finished speaking, and I watched them with newly-awakened curiosity. It was remarkable how kindly the *ex-roué*, the man of clubs and betting-rooms and *coulisses*, had taken to domestic life. He had a cigar in his mouth as he entered, and frowned a little on seeing us, I suppose at the prospect of curtailed enjoyment.

'Ah, you may smoke on,' said his wife fondly; 'these ladies do not mind, do you now?'

Mind? Who would have the heart to? It was clearly a prerogative in her eyes to be admitted to the smell of Leopold's tobacco.

He came and put himself into the armchair by her side—Hercules to her Omphale—and with a certain expression, if not of beatitude, at least of calm absence of irritation, on his countenance.

'Leopold,' began Omphale,

seizing instinctively what appeared a most favourable moment, 'shall I say Monday the 14th for our *soirée*?'

'O, confound the *soirée*,' returned Hercules readily. 'What idea is this of yours, to begin giving parties already?'

'It is not for my pleasure, but I have promised, my best one. Von Zbirow has asked me to bring out this new *protégé* of his.' And turning to us she explained: 'A young bass, only twenty-two years old, who can already go one note lower than anybody else. Then the Herr Doctor will also play himself, he says, which is one great honour. What am I to do?'

'Tell him to go to the devil,' said Hercules comfortably; and his wife laughed.

'That would hardly do, little love. Be sure, like yourself, I think it all a great trouble. With you here it is all one to me if I see no company. Only we have old friends in Ludwigsheim, whom if I were to offend, papa would not like it. We do not "receive," as the Germans do. So let me give this one party, English fashion, to show them civility, and have done. Papa must then be satisfied for the present, and we need trouble ourselves no more.'

Papa held the purse-strings, as Leopold was well aware.

'Well, have it your own way,' groaned Hercules, 'but for God's sake don't bother me about it again.'

'There, there,' said she soothingly, delighted to have coaxed permission out of him so easily; 'it is nice of you to be so good, as I know you are longing to leave Ludwigsheim. On the 15th we go to Count Marylski's, near Homburg,' she added to us.

Leopold's countenance cleared

slowly, as Sophie continued to talk to us of the more congenial amusements that neighbourhood afforded, until the offending *soirée* had passed out of his mind.

So far she showed no want of tact in dealing with him. The more I saw of the pair, the more I perceived that there had been much wisdom in his choice of a wife. Sophie was no woman to perplex him with delicacies of sentiment, or torment him with importunate demonstrations of romantic affection. At the same time she was always ready to give up to him in essentials, her good-humour only requiring of him to let her have her own way in trifles. And, Omphale having brought Hercules out of debt, and placed him in comparative affluence, it was really incumbent on him to defer to her views of life and things, for a time. He seemed to acknowledge that, and submitted with a good grace. For a time. The worst was she admired him, and one felt that, though rather dense, she must be undeceived some day. A personal acquaintance had served only to confirm and deepen my first impressions of Hilda's ex-lover. He troubled himself very little about Eva and myself, dimly conscious, perhaps, that we and he had nothing in common; and, feeling no curiosity to study his opposites as such, he just tolerated us, that was all. As Sophie's husband, we agreed to tolerate him. But his nature—simple, direct, written in big plain letters all over his countenance and demeanour—was of a kind I could as soon have fraternised with as with the strong, sleek, handsome carnivora at the Zoological Gardens. Many such selfish, vindictive, unscrupulous, cruelly self-indulgent gentleman-animals may exist, but few so transparent in

their disposition as he. No life with him could long run smooth. With the first trial the smash must come. But whatever his evil propensities, they slumbered now from January to June.

Sophie, in her household, was the picture of wifely felicity, pure and simple, enjoying to the full that emancipation which marriage brings—whatever the spinsters may say to the contrary—freedom to pay and receive visits unchaperoned, plenty of money to spend, and an establishment to rule. As for her husband, so far, at least, he answered all reasonable expectations, and hers were of the most moderate order.

On the fourteenth evening of the month the Honourable Mrs. Meredith's promised entertainment came off. The reception began with a concert, and there was talk of a dance afterwards. Sophie was floating in a sea of delight. Her dress, was it not from Paris? her *frisure*, something quite new? Every person of the requisite social rank and artistic eminence, English or German, that happened to be in Ludwigshheim at the time, had been bidden, and most of them had come, and she was acting Circe to her guests—a reformed, domesticated, perfectly harmless Circe. Such a compound of solid homely virtues and superficial spontaneous coquetry never grows on British soil, and hardly enters into British philosophy. One moment Sophie is receiving sonnets, bouquets, keepsakes from respectful adorners; the next, she is in the larder or kitchen, superintending the pudding with loving care, or hard at work knitting Leopold's stockings. To her little flirtations Circe's husband showed not the smallest objection. He rather admired his wife himself, and if ever he had any qualms of

doubt upon the question, it was something of a relief to his mind to have them dissipated by seeing her the object of admiring attentions from others, so long, of course, as she did not prefer one of these gentlemen before another, and preferred him, as now, before all.

We arrived early, and found him—he was not musical—expositulating meekly with his wife on the length of the programme.

‘Where shall I go, my dear,’ said he, ‘that I may not be obliged to listen?’

‘Stop near the door, my love,’ she responded, ‘and I will send you all the stupid unmusical people to talk to.’

There he posted himself accordingly, and thence, before very long, he contrived mysteriously to disappear—I suspect with a friend and kindred spirit or two into the smoking-room.

The concert had begun. It was far above an average musical evening in London, to say nothing of English country towns, where every Corydon and Phyllis are so readily enticed into making tremulous exhibitions of incapacity, or intrepid ones of blissful insensibility,—as though the end justified the means, and good and bad musicians were on a par because St. Cecilia and her art are sacred!

There was a rising Polish star pianist, who had been known to break three pianos in the course of one evening; an *ex-prima donna*, now a rich banker’s wife; a ponderous German tenor, the young and unfathomable bass, a stringed quartett of amateurs,—all, professionals and others, bringing their share of proof to the fact of German supremacy in music, if nowhere else.

For music is the single art in which the transcendental German ideal can shine, unbroken and

undisfigured by the homely realities of German life; the sole art which, essentially immaterial, lies out of reach of the intrusion of sorry unrefined practicalities, in its glorious abstract idealism. No bathetic touches can interfere to mar the effect of its loftiest flights. That romantic German *Lied* is a vial containing the concentrated essence of all the inner finer aspirations of a man whose outward mien and habits and chosen surroundings have probably not an ethereal touch about them. Had he been a painter this would have oozed out in his work. He might have given us bread-cheese-and-beery Madonnas, or otherwise betrayed that his imagination had not been nurtured upon the materially beautiful.

And the singer who interprets the composition. She is stout and old and vulgar-looking. But shut your eyes, and you must own with what cultivated taste, what admirably artistic effect, she gives each difficult, suggestive phrase. She has feelings and aspirations too, and it is only in music she can air them so as to do them justice.

‘My dear little Miss Maisie, you are going to sing for us now;’ and up came Mrs. Meredith caressingly, and led me off to the piano.

‘Herr von Zbirow has not yet arrived,’ she added, with a sigh; ‘and he promised so faithfully.’

Just as she spoke his well-known figure appeared at the door. Instinctively everybody made room for him to pass, and he came gliding through that dense comfortable-looking mass of men and women like a cold sharp flash of light.

He made his bow and compliment to the hostess, and then addressed himself to me.

'You are on the point to sing. I will accompany you.'

And he seated himself at the piano. From the commotion that followed this move, the astonishment on all faces, and the little buzz that went round the room, I gathered that this was an enormous piece of condescension on his part. Never, whispered Sophie, had she heard of his doing such a thing before.

'What is your song?' he asked.

It was one of his own to words of Heine's. He began to prelude carelessly, just as though he had done nothing all his professional life but accompany young lady amateurs on the pianoforte.

Pleased, and very far from being intimidated, I sang—

'IN A STRANGE LAND.

What drives thee forth from shore to shore?

Thyself thou knowst not why;
The winds breathe low a tender word,
Lookst round thee wondering.

The love, so far behind thee left,
Whispers thee softly now,
"Return, return, I love thee well;
My heart's delight art thou."

Away, away! no haven found;
No resting-place implore.
That which was dearest to thine heart
Shalt thou behold no more.'

They applauded—encored. Von Zbirow forbade me to repeat, made me sing another. When it was over and I retreated, I took a chair in the recess of a window, fighting against a sudden, strange, deadly faintness, a feeling that was apt to surprise me now after the slightest over-excitement or exertion.

'Do you always sing as well as to-night, Picciola?' said a low playful voice at my side.

It was Von Zbirow, who had followed me and posted himself here, with his back to the company.

'Not always; but sometimes better,' said I, with intent to provoke.

'Ah, something put you out. Must have been the accompaniment as played by me.'

'I own, when you play I want to listen; feel tempted to sink into your piano's singing accompaniment.'

'That is the worst compliment you could pay me.'

'No, *Meister*; it is because sympathetic accompaniments are so rare that they startle me.'

'Leave we compliments, then. You cannot suffer such things, I feel sure.'

'Try me,' said I, laughing; 'you will find I've a good appetite left for such things when they come from you. You don't give me the chance of getting tired of them.'

He laughed too, and was going to speak, when Sophie, who had been eyeing us with curiosity, and half annoyed to see the biggest lion in her show skulk apart thus unaccountably engrossed, came up, saying pathetically,

'Now, Herr Doctor, it is really too cruel of you to hide yourself away in the curtains like a moth, while we are all dying, literally dying, to hear you on the piano.'

'Then, my most gracious, it is your funeral marches that you now ask for. Shall I play you a selection to choose from?'

'Play what you please,' she said, with her most flatteringsmile. 'It is our part to listen and admire.'

Another minute and he was at the piano, and had dashed headlong into a fantasia of Liszt's, composing it over again, it would seem, as he played.

Whilst it lasted the excitement of listening sustained me. When he ceased, I felt the threatening faintness again. I rebelled against it flatly, and forced myself to attend to a long bravura solo on the violoncello that followed next.

But the spectacles were upon

me once more. 'Picciola,' he whispered, when the violoncello desisted at last, 'you are as pale as one ghost.'

'I am tired,' said I; 'and I do not think I can stay on, if they are going to dance. I should like best to slip away quietly and go home.'

Eva was looking very complacent in the midst of a circle of amiable German wives and daughters. I was loth to disturb her; she was fond of dancing too.

'Let me; I will manage it for you;' and he went up at once to Mrs. Meredith, saying smoothly, 'Pardon, my most gracious, but I have the honour to wish you a good-evening. You know my early habits. Meess Noel wish me for to tell you she feel faint and fatigued, and want to know if you will excuse her.' And as Sophie, concerned, ran up to me with her salts, he followed, saying, 'Perhaps you will permit me to see her home quickly, and then Meess Eva can stay the dance. I have a carriage at the door.'

Sophie looked at us for a moment with an indescribably disconcerted expression; then shrugged her shoulders imperceptibly, and replied, with a good grace,

'Ah, by all means; that will be very kind of you. Good-night, my dear Miss Maisie. The Herr Doctor says he will be so good as to escort you safe back in his carriage. Go home and rest. But you really should stay for this last trio. That violoncello plays most magnificent.'

called his carriage, an open one, and followed me into it.

'What was the matter?' said he, as we drove off, relapsing all at once into German. He always spoke his own language to me whenever we happened to be alone. 'Was it that long solo on the violoncello?'

'Yes; a sudden attack of violoncello,' said I, trying to laugh. 'I have never been quite strong since my illness last winter.'

'Does the air refresh you a little?'

'Very much. I wish the drive home were longer.'

'Do you?'

The night was warm and mild, the air filled with a soft summer film of mist, too faint to hide the stars. The light little carriage rolled on smoothly through the wide vacant streets. The monotonous motion, half-lights, and languid atmosphere insensibly lulled me into a pleasant waking trance, like the effect of mild opium. The drawing-room clap-trap, parrots' chatter, and automatic laughter, that had rung in our ears a moment ago, seemed a thousand miles off already.

'What are you listening to?' asked Von Zbirow suddenly.

Another man would have said, 'What are you thinking of?' But he had hit the mark, and I smiled.

'The music of the spheres; eh, Picciola?'

'Then you are one sphere and Liszt is the other. I was listening to the fantasia you played to-night.'

'Ah! He leant back and seemed inclined to lapse into a reverie. Presently he began again, as if continuing a train of thought aloud.'

'And how long have you been here now with Fräulein Eva?'

'Six months it is.'

CHAPTER XV.

A NOCTURN.

VON ZBIROW hurried me downstairs, found my hat and cloak,

Calendar months perhaps, but each to me as indefinitely extensive a period of time as any of the six 'days' of creation.

'Do you never find it lonely? Perhaps you like solitude.'

'*Meister*, times come when solitude is more than the best—it is the *only* thing.'

'You mean times when loneliness sticks like one's shadow; and whether in a crowd, or at a ball, or in the bosom of one's family, one remains absolutely alone in the spirit, alone as if on the top of Mount Atlas. Then, true, it pains least to be literally so too.'

'How well you understand!'

'I? Of course. I have not been fifty years at school for nothing. But at your age—'

'My age!' I repeated, mimicking him. 'Do you take it for the age of gold?'

'It should be.'

'Never believe that, *Meister*; there is clay in it.'

'Ah, wait only till it is past,' said he quietly, but with a touch of sadness; and I stood rebuked. Talking to him, it was so easy to forget his fifty years. He was one of those men who can never be dated. Von Zbirow young was something simply unimaginable, yet he looked as though he never would bear some of the characters of old age. Such natures are like metals, and suggest neither embryo, maturity, nor decay—strangers equally to crudeness, bloom, and senility.

The drive appeared to have lengthened itself unaccountably, as if in compliance with my random wish.

'What gates are those?' I asked, rousing myself with an effort. 'Does your coachman know the way to the Carolinen-strasse?'

'O, this is a trifle longer, that is all.'

'But I see trees—water,' said I, leaning out. 'Why, Herr Doctor, I declare we are in the park!'

'I confess it. Forgive me. I ordered the man to drive us once round. I knew the air would do you good. You said so yourself.'

I laughed. 'So it does. And this is your way of hurrying me home. I wonder what Mrs. Meredith would say?'

'That we shall happily never know. The carriage will take you and me round the park and back to the Carolinen-strasse in an hour, so that your friend, when she returns, will find you safe at home.'

I acquiesced. Von Zbirow was a privileged person, a military despot in his own small circle, and nobody ever dreamt of disputing his martial law. Why should I?

The park lay before us in its rare pleasantness. No bleak, bare, trodden, sun-scorched downs, reader, broken by worm-eaten trees and edged with stiff beds of stiff flowers—a desert, good for school-feasts or reviews; nor yet a formal promenade, the emporium of fresh air, perhaps, but of nothing else that is fresh. Ludwigshausen's is planned after the model of an English nobleman's country pleasure-grounds, with running streams swept by willows, thick woodlands, with intervals of long waving grass and field-flowers, a *pastorale*, all but unchecked by reminiscences of the citizens and their city.

Pleasant by day, and by night bewitching, when the nursery-maids are all gone, and the bands, and the tourists in their one-horse droschkies. It was not the season either, and Von Zbirow and I had the domain to ourselves.

'A good exchange this for Frau Merrydick's *salon*,' sighed my companion.

'She would not say yes to that.'

'No; but she was made for indoors only,' he said, with a little sneer, 'like her caps and slippers. Some women are. They are angels at home, but out of the house you find the angel has clipped wings.'

'It is not their fault, *Meister*. What else could you expect of those who are brought up as we women are, under glass?'

'Do I blame them for it?'

'You ought to pity them at least.'

'I won't pity them. Pity means contempt, and for my part I have always preferred their society to that of men.'

'Great minds often do prefer the society of their inferiors.'

'You are sarcastic, *Picciola*. Now do you know the reason why?' and he looked at me earnestly, speaking with great animation in his self-defence. 'Because, with my superiors, if I am to please, it means that I have sometimes to bow and cringe, to hide, or bridle, or rub out my own self, or to make its own apology as best I can; and all that is hateful to me.'

I could well believe it must be so, to his proud, singular mind. No wonder he was repeatedly at loggerheads with his brother musicians.

'Now with my—my inferiors,' he continued, 'I can always be myself, without fear, or constraint, or excuse—myself very much.'

'One for the ladies, then?' said I. 'But to whose society must we turn for this kind of mental relief? Children, I suppose, or dogs.'

'Bitter, as usual.'

'No, no. I have a small mind, and like the society of my superiors best, be they men or women.'

'I should like to know whereabouts to put you in the scale of creation,' said he, laughing oddly; 'for sometimes I believe you are a sprite.'

Mentally I returned the compliment, as I watched him reclining—his head thrown back, his hat off, and the lamplight twinkling upon his pale protean face.

We rolled on steadily, lightly—the scene was like some fairy tale of Andersen's—the frogs croaking in the water, bats flitting to and fro over the surface, lizards rustling in the grass; strange bird-notes and 'floating whispers' came to us from the trees as we rushed past; the tiny equipage, stolid driver, and inside—he and I. What mysterious meeting-place could it be that our differing spirits had found? He, the egotistical successful artist-genius, to whom laurels and triumphs had become as daily bread; things to be taken for granted till they had ceased to excite in him any special joy and thankfulness,—he accepted them as coolly, and returned thanks for them mechanically, though perhaps they had become just as indispensable as meat and drink to his existence. And I, a girl to whom laurels and rose-leaves, real or visionary, seemed also things of beauty and joy no longer, but to whom some curious fancy appeared to draw him closer and closer with an invisible chain.

Von Zhirow talked; he *could* talk when not in a huff or constrained by the presence of what he called his antidotes; no one better, no one more skilful to insinuate himself into the heart of his companion. Women usually began by admiring and half fearing, then pitied, and ended by loving him. O, I had heard his whole biography from Sophie Meredith—an artist's history. That strange, quizzical, gifted man

had won hearts many—broken some, and inspired passions and poems in plenty. I understood it now. One of these fair devotees he had married; but he lost his wife within a year.

'The greatest mercy for both, my dear,' said Sophie candidly. 'She was beautiful and well-born, and sat at his feet all day long; but if she had not died early, he would have wearied of this, and some wild new fit would have driven him to leave her. As it was, it all ended well; and he has a real respect for her memory.'

The drive was over too soon. Suddenly the carriage stopped before our garden-gate. We dismounted, and as he held it open for me I gave him my hand, saying,

'Good-night, *Meister*; I shall not forget our nocturn in the park.'

He made no answer. As I turned away, and went into the house, I heard the carriage roll off. Indoors all was dark and still. Frau Richter had gone to bed; Eva not yet returned. I chose to sit up for her, and waited in the dark among the ivy and dwarf oleanders. I felt no longer faint nor tired, but nerved and exhilarated by the midnight drive and the stirring companionship of him from whom I had just parted.

Von Zbirow was right to prefer women's society. They only would treat him fairly. Men blundered; and in their rough contempt for certain feminine characteristics of vanity, intense irritability, and too fastidious sensibilities, never acknowledged how far these, in him, sprang from the same exceptional organisation—which made of him what he was—the first tone poet of his generation.

Sudden music broke upon my psychological philosophy. For

one moment I believed in oral delusions; the next, I perceived that the sounds came from the studio piano in the garden.

'It is the Herr Doctor. That door is never locked, and he has walked in, simply. O the splendid impudence of some people!

'So much the better for me, then. I shall sit here and listen. It will beguile the time till Eva comes. But what a freak of yours, *Meister*!

'You are the only pianist who forces us into forgetfulness of the wood, wires, and ivory that are your means of musical enchantment. Only one pair of hands in there and one piano, yet there comes forth this symphony, with tones and shades of tone unlimited, it would seem, at command.

'It is growing wilder and wilder. I never heard him play thus before. It is like the Bacchanals—a mysterious inspired madness; might catch the listener, too. I rather hope Eva will *not* come back immediately. I wish to hear some more of this.'

At last I stole out. The studio-door was open, and I placed myself there in the shadow cast by a lamp outside. His back was turned as he sat at the piano; but I could see his aristocratic silhouette reflected in large, and sharply defined on the wall.

Presently, without pausing or looking round, he said,

'Come in, Picciola.'

'Why, *Meister*, have you eyes—that is to say, spectacles—in the back of your head?'

'Yes; for some things, and some people. Come in, I tell you.'

Now I was never in the least afraid of Von Zbirow. I came in, and sat on the sofa to listen.

Who shall define wealth for us, or say where it lies? Von Zbirow at his piano is like a millionaire

showering down pearls and diamonds before a greedy impoverished gaping world. Again, where music is not, he fades by comparison into nothing.

He was improvising now, following some passing fancy of his own, sketching it boldly as he went.

'Well!' said he all at once, stopping and wheeling round, as if to give the signal for applause.

'O, beautiful!' I stammered, unprepared, and with the genuine awkward stupidity of an English girl.

'Is that all your answer?'

'Answer! answer!'

'You know they say, and I believe it, that a whole biography could be written in music. Cannot I make mine speak so much as a few words to you?'

He spoke softly, left the piano, came and seated himself facing me.

'More than that,' he continued, as I did not reply, 'one may play to a crowd, as at the Gräfin's party, and be intelligible but to a single soul.'

His eyes, habitually downcast, now in one of their sudden awakenings blinded me with their significance.

'I was wondering,' I began philosophically—I delighted to fling some prosaic workaday speech like a stone into the flood of his rhapsodies; it served to pique and to delight him too—'what is the worth of all these good things people call substantial—money, diamonds, great possessions—whether they have really anything to do with happiness, and whether if we were all perfectly rich and perfectly healthy, earth would be much more like heaven than before, and less of a dusky limbo, half of whose inhabitants are ready to cut their throats with spleen. But could the world last without

genius, which keeps alive in us the love of the infinite, even if we cannot attain it, and the dream of an ideal, to save us from becoming brutes or machines?'

'I like to hear that, from you.'

His gaze had softened into a smile—such a smile as one bends on a favourite child.

'Picciola, I am an old man; and you are so young. Does it not seem strange that there should be sympathy between us?'

Sympathy, sympathy—always sympathy. The word seemed made to mock me.

'Music is neither old nor young,' said I.

'So there we meet, and shake hands. But is it to be *only* there?'

I was silent.

'Picciola, you say my music speaks to you. But I fear it is you who write the words, not I.'

'Why so?'

'Because you look always as if it conjured up memories of the past, not dreams of the future.'

'O, no, not the past!' I exclaimed, with a flash of eagerness he misunderstood. One does not fear Memory unless he pursues.

'What then? does it speak to you of to-morrow?'

'That, *Meister*, is what I do not hear so clearly.'

'Shall I make it plain to you now?'

'In music?'

'No; in words.'

His eyes burned and brightened, there was youth in his face, as if, like Faust, he had cast off wear and tear in a moment—a supreme moment, that may revolutionise a whole life.

What is he saying now? Words more intelligible certainly than any arrangement of crotchets and quavers; eloquent and tender words of flattery and—sympathy, I suppose.

It was for me, then, the revived

sweetness of this gifted spirit. Pity, interest, admiration for the lonely man and master musician had never been stronger in me than at that moment. It was a proud part that he offered me to play—to share his life henceforth. Who could fail to be won by the insinuating charm of his words, ay, and of his presence?

One by one, as those words fell from his lips, they dropped into my soul like bits of ice—or iron, if you will. I felt further from him at every syllable he spoke. I had been under a spell, unre-sisted, which was lifting now. I looked into my own heart and recoiled.

And to how many had those lips breathed the same phrases before, as gracefully, as fervently, as sincerely? What a farce it all is at the best!

I got up from the sofa suddenly, went and stood leaning against the piano, clasped my hands over my head, and burst into a paroxysm of half-convulsive laughter.

It startled Von Zbirow; sobered him too.

'Promise me one thing, *Meister*,' I said.

'Name it.'

'Never to speak to me so, except in music.'

He flushed slightly, rose, grasped my hand; I let him.

'Picciola, what do you mean?'

'You know what I mean. In music we may all take what dreams we please. Who cares? But do not let us drag their false-ness into the light of day by trying to make them real.'

Silence. Then he spoke sadly, not offended, but wounded, I fear.

'You have no heart.'

'None,' said I. 'Congratulate me.'

He looked at me steadily with

that terrible soul to soul scrutiny that lays old wounds bare, till I felt myself turning white with pain, and my head reeled. Did he understand? Did he forgive?

How long that moment lasted I do not know. Sounds of wheels were heard outside, and the next instant he was gone without another word.

It was Eva who had returned. Presently, seeing the studio-door open, she looked in, and stopped short in astonishment to find me there, standing in the middle of the room.

'Maisie, are you up still? What can you be doing here?'

'You may well ask, Eva. Since we parted I have run through a whole three-volume novel in two hours.'

'O, tell me about it!' she exclaimed eagerly. 'Was it not Von Zbirow himself who brushed past me just now in the garden?'

'Certainly it was. He took me for a long drive round the park. That was the first volume.'

'Well?'

'Then we came home, and he sat and played to me here for some time. That was the second.'

'Go on.'

'Afterwards—I know you will laugh, Eva, but it is all true, as true as that I stand here—he ended by a declaration; he did indeed.'

But Eva did not laugh. Instead she looked eager and responsive, and asked in tones of subdued emotion and affectionate interest,

'And you, dear—what did you say?'

'Say? What should you think? what would you have me say?'

'Even you, Maisie, must surely, surely feel the pride I—any one would at being his chosen,' she said half-inquiringly. 'You have promised to be his ministering angel, dear; your love will save

his sensitive nature some of the slings and arrows of life. How happy you are !

'I told him,' I said derisively, 'to preach Beethoven to the birds, but not to talk love to me.'

'You have no heart,' she sighed reproachfully.

'So he said,' was all I could reply.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN OLD SONG ENDED.

'Mais où sont les neiges d'autan ?'

WINTER had come again. After a brief autumn, passed among the country wilds, the lakes and highlands beloved of all Ludwigsheim landscape-painters, we had returned to our old quarters in the Carolinen-strasse. Christmas found us there still.

And with no thought of leaving yet, although I was no longer on the sick-list, but must give credit to the doctor's sagacity, the keen mountain air, and to change and time, for having done their work at last in fully restoring the health and strength I had lost. I might have thanked them for it had their success served for anything better than to quicken the sense of spiritual fibre and nerve crippled and damnified—something beyond repair by the touch of the stimulant of the Alps or the anodyne of years.

But our stay abroad having answered so well, we were naturally inclined to prolong it. We had no wish to move until we were recalled, and so far our respective families seemed to be getting on perfectly well without us. 'We have imported the colonial brother and sister-in-law,' Ethel had written, 'nephews, nieces, and all.' 'They are rather a nice lot on the whole,' subjoined Claude

in a postscript, 'considering their education in the bush. There's lots of room for improvement still ; but Ethel and I are doing our best, and I daresay we shall succeed in civilising them in time.'

They had come for three months, stayed nine, 'and as yet,' wrote the twins in their last missive, 'show no signs of giving warning.' Meanwhile they overran the house ; thus my room was worth something, whatever my company. As to Mr. Severn, he had adopted an old relative in reduced circumstances to keep house for him for the time, and was so gratified by the ever-present consciousness of combining real charity to her with real personal convenience to himself that he could scarcely find it in him to fret over Eva's absence. Thus the summons or entreaties to return we had feared and expected to receive never came. And let no young lady with brothers and sisters, in her vanity, be so far deceived by the commotion and complaints caused in her family by her defection at meal-times, or any unwonted extension of a short absence, as to fancy herself indispensable at home. Let her but mark, when interest (stern necessity apart), an advantageous marriage, or such promotion, removes one olive-branch from the table, how speedily and comfortably the remainder adapt themselves to the new conditions. It was, therefore, without much remorse that we settled to remain till after Easter in Ludwigsheim, where Eva had begun a regular course of art-studies.

The Merediths had been absent for many months, and were now on a visit to the rich papa Von Seckendorf at Vienna. In November we had received the news of the birth there of Sophie's son and heir, Francis Joseph.

She wrote to us often, seemed in the highest spirits, and 'Leopold' sent his love regularly. Eva was perpetually quoting him as the model of husbands, and I could not deny that appearances were in his favour. Sheer laziness may tame a tiger so as to render him practically harmless. Mr. Meredith might end by falling in love with respectability, whose charms, as we know, will sometimes begin to dawn upon a man as he approaches middle life.

Von Zbirow had left the town, not to return this winter. He had a villa far away on the Main, where, it was said, he always chose to ensconce himself when engaged upon any musical composition, and report spoke of him as having just completed some work of importance. But Ludwigsheim could tell us no particulars, and from himself, since that midsummer night's dream, half a year ago, I had had but these lines:

'The promise you asked for is given already. If I speak now it is but one leaving word over what is past before you have time to forget it. Picciola, I think you laugh in your heart to be the last love of an old man. It is because you don't know what that means. To boys and girls love comes so differently, so surely, springs up in the heart for the asking. The first comer may inspire it. The kindred spirit you seek, if you do not find it this year in this place, will meet you next year in that. There comes a time when to love is as rare as snow in August. A man looks round and feels that the world does not now contain the living being who could force his heart from him. But he would forfeit all else to find himself mistaken.

'Does he prize it then, or no? Is it less worth, less to be thought of, because it comes late to one

who has nothing more to hope from illusions?

'And to have loved once again must be enough for me. Be it so. I shall spread a little of that light over the years left—it must last me for those, for it will not come again. But neither will I have a sharp truth spoil a sweet fancy, nor yet what was sweet too and no fancy—our friendship. I shall claim yours when we meet again. Remember that, and forget what you will besides. Addio, Picciola, for a long, long time.'

So ended that page, for me.

It was New-year's eve. I sat by the stove sewing. Men may come and men may go, but gloves must be mended, buttons must be put on, and we had no maid with us at Ludwigsheim. But I never engaged in this feminine occupation without a devout wish that the day may get more and more distant when 'every lady her own needlewoman' shall be the rule. Stitching is not always soothing; it leaves the mind too free. To-day, in its character of anniversary, festival, and landmark, brought unwelcome tenacious associations. How those holiday times rejoiced my heart when a child! How I hated them now, and the merry memories they called up, like fiends in pretty shapes, under whose visitation I winced and chafed in vain! None can kill them or drive them away.

Suddenly, in desperation, turning round to Eva, I began at random,

'These ten months have we been in Ludwigsheim, dear, and seen less than most tourists see in ten days. Excepting the picture-gallery we have left everything undone, from the cathedral to the royal stables.'

'When shall we begin?' said Eva meekly.

'I mean to begin now. I am going out to buy a *Murray*, and then we can attack one of the churches before it gets dark.'

'Then I'm afraid you will have to begin by yourself. That picture of kingfishers for Mrs. Meredith must be finished by this evening. I promised it her long ago, and they return to-morrow.'

The picture was wanted for papa Von Seckendorf's birthday, which would wait for no one. Nothing daunted, however, I started off alone to humour my whim, procured my *Murray*, and in returning by the cathedral I went inside.

It is the oldest and perhaps the ugliest church of which Ludwigsheim can boast; a large plain brick pile of some four hundred years' standing, and contains some wood carvings, a monument to a German emperor, and a Turkish flag from the battle of Belgrade.

My ardour for investigation was soon checked. Objects of interest, in fact, were nowhere; so I was reduced to watching the tourist parties as they came round, some staring aimlessly, blankly, in all directions, as though puzzling in vain to discover what they had come out there for to see; others happy and irresponsible as soldiers or sheep, because marshalled along by courier and cicerone.

The cicerone, as we know him, is a thoroughly modern type. Nothing corresponding to this race of tutors in the market-place for grown-up children could ever have arisen except in an age like ours, an age of universal travel. He belongs to internationalism, is the offspring of modern curiosity, modern restlessness, modern wealth and the oppressive leisure it often brings, modern virtues and vices. He is a parasite of course, has no separate importance, subsisting entirely on the ignorance of the rich and idle.

Still it may happen occasionally the parasite is more noble than its prey, as good ivy may grow on a rotten tower.

What Christian patience is his, what unalterable good-humour! When in manners, dress, intelligence, he is vastly superior to most of his scholars, *he* must know it, though the fact may be beyond their ken, and at any rate does not prevent them from treating him, some with vulgar condescension, others with airy contempt. There must surely be some insolent irony lurking under his smooth glib address, as he satisfies their random curiosity, and enlightens their profoundest ignorance with the most perfect courtesy and amiability. Sometimes he is past writhing under the slight of being reckoned, not as a man, but as a talking and walking handbook. Or sometimes it may be that his self-respect sits so high as to be beyond the reach of petty darts of the kind.

So ran my meditations, which had been started by the sound of the voice of a man expounding the cathedral to a particularly large party of English whom he was escorting over the building. In this case the lecturer's superiority of knowledge was evidently accompanied by a certain social standing, for nothing could exceed the reverential attention and submissive air with which most of his flock seemed to regard him. But as in a class of school-children there will always be found one or two misconstituted minds too dense or too lazy to think, except by proxy, and who are for ever vexing the soul of the school-master by importunate questions, so here the speaker, when at the most interesting point of his lecture, was sure to be checked and interrupted by some of the ladies of his convoy, who fastened upon

him, and never ceased plying him with all sorts of irrelevant inquiries and obvious remarks, as if struggling to usurp the lion's share of his attention.

To one or two of the party who were foreigners he occasionally addressed himself in French, so fluent that I began to doubt whether he could be the countryman for which I had set him down at first. But now and then, when he spoke a few words in German to the sacristan, I wondered again. He seemed equally at home in that language. Perhaps he was a native Teuton after all.

Before the party broke up I heard them thanking their leader, and making arrangements with him for a visit to the sculpture-gallery on some future day. They then dispersed.

It was growing dusk. I had forgotten the time, and rose hastily to leave the church. As I passed the old beadle, who was parading the aisle, affecting a hobble, as if to give a *raison d'être* for his long staff, I stopped to ask him a trifling question—whether he could tell me if and how it was possible to get an order to see the pictures in the royal palace, which happened then to be closed.

He shook his head with the inveterate pessimism of a German official. O, yes, he could tell me for certain that there was no way. The palace was shut up for three months, and it was absolutely impossible to obtain admission.

'Nonsense — quite possible,' said a cool English voice behind us; 'the easiest thing in the world. It is merely that the place is not open as usual to the public, and that you require an order.'

Turning round, I encountered the keenest pair of eyes I had ever met, looking out of an intelligent face sharpened in outline, full of

suppleness of expression, and with the air of a mind that never sleeps. It was the captain of the regiment of tourists I had been watching so curiously a few minutes before.

The beadle, with the utmost alacrity, referred me for what I wanted to know to this English gentleman as the best authority on the subject. He in return rallied the beadle unmercifully on his general ignorance of all that was going on under his nose, adding, to me,

'You know that in Ludwigsheim it takes one week for a piece of news to travel from the Grand Hotel to the Domplatz. Give it another, and perhaps it may get as far as the *Tages Anzeiger*.'

I laughed, and suggested that he, perhaps, could tell me where we must apply for the order in question. He offered to get us one himself, adding that he was engaged to take a large party over the palace in a day or two. Might we join? I inquired. He replied that it was open to all who cared to do so. In any case he would procure the admission for us, and leave it at our house to-morrow.

I thanked him and gave our address. In return, he presented me with his card,

'MR. ALBERT GREY.'

A countryman then, after all. I went home laughing to myself over my adventure, and announced to Eva triumphantly that I had engaged a guide to take us over the king's palace, and explain the *Nibelungen* frescoes it contained.

'Have you really?' she said good-humouredly.

'Eva, what a treasure you are!' I remarked; 'nothing takes you aback. I know if I had returned and told you that the king was coming here in person to take you out for a drive, you would

merely have replied, "Is he really?"

She laughed.

'Tell me about the guide. Where and how did you find each other?'

'I picked him up in the cathedral. A most extraordinary man. He seems a perfect mint of information, I assure you.'

'Won't he be expensive?' she suggested.

'True, I never thought of that. But we needn't take him again. It was quite by accident. I was speaking to the sacristan, and he chimed in. But I had noticed him before, holding forth to a body of tourists. He is an Englishman, and his name is Grey.'

'Grey!' she exclaimed, with a little start.

'Yes, Albert Grey. Dear child, what's the matter? I have surprised you after all, it seems.'

'Albert Grey!'

She had grown quite pale. I threw myself on the sofa, and shut my eyes. 'I know what is coming. We are on the stage. I see it all. It is "Aha, that face!" "I've heard that name before!" Go on!'

'What is he like?' asked Eva tremulously.

'Middle height, thinnish, face young, but a little worn; looks as if he had been out, literally and figuratively, in all weathers.'

She shook her head dubiously.

'Grey is such a common name.'

'Yes, but there is something uncommon in that name for you. Won't you tell me what? He is coming to-morrow morning. Supposing it were the same? Have I made some frightful mistake?'

So she told me the romance of her life—a ten years' old love-story—but the memory of which, like the Sleeping Beauty, had lain unchangeable; and when awakened

again, rose up in her mind fresh and untarnished as ever. She had given me the outline long ago; now first I heard the tale in full.

When Eva Severn was a pretty girl of twenty, she had joined an art-school in London, where she found all the young lady pupils rather more than less in love with an amateur fellow-student, Mr. Albert Grey, a clever, gentlemanly, agreeable young fellow, who, by his attractions and easy conquests, made the despair of his companion painters.

The only girl he never flirted with was Eva. Instead, they struck up a friendship on the ground of art, for which Mr. Grey had just at that time resolved to 'go in' professionally. His family disapproving, he intended to support himself by his own exertions. He was enamoured with his art, or rather with that Bohemian, reckless, pleasant, picturesque life in studios, and finally with Eva, as its idealised feminine incarnation. They became engaged, and Mr. Grey, to make up for lost time, began to paint ten hours a day.

In love's voyage it would seem as if there were always some perilous ground to be traversed, where nine-tenths of those who start founder, some before, some after marriage. The crisis is not brought about as in fiction by suppression of letters, forgeries, falsehoods told by jealous sisters, and the poison of unfounded suspicions—not, briefly, by deceit and blindness, but by restored vision.

A moment was due when the restless versatile life-adept should clash with the sensibilities of the calm inexperienced girl. The cause? No matter what. A trifling jealousy on her part, impatience and coldness on his. The result? Breach of a link too weak to begin with.

'I was wrong and exacting,'

said Eva, with a sigh. 'I see it now. But everything went against us.'

For lovers the rule holds good, that Heaven helps those who help themselves. The moment they vacillated opportunity became their enemy. Family troubles obliged Eva to absent herself from the school for some time. When she returned Grey had left, and was gone no one knew whither, and every girl had a different story to tell.

And from that day to this he and she had never met.

'A guide did you say?' she repeated vehemently. 'But what can have befallen him? Mr. Grey was a man of good family and education. His parents were very rich people. I don't understand it at all.'

I hastened to explain. I had only been joking. Mr. Grey, as I had perceived at once, was no more a guide than M. Jourdain was a merchant. Only he happened to be in possession of a large stock of information on the subject of foreign towns, and imparted it to his friends for a consideration. But besides, what if he were? Gentlemen of position have done worse. Had it not once been distinctly stated in the papers that many of the younger sons of the nobility, and not a few clergymen and other decayed dignitaries, were to be found among the drivers of hansom cabs? There was nothing degrading in the occupation of cicerone, which Mr. Grey appeared to have chosen. On the contrary, teaching is accounted an honourable calling, and teachers of men must be wiser than teachers of boys.

Eva had to yield to my arguments.

'But *you* must see him first when he comes to-morrow,' she said. 'I shall like him to know

beforehand whom he is going to encounter.'

'As you please.'

The meeting between them bade fair to be a piquant, scarcely a painful one. That love had remained like a sainted relic in the sweet shrine of Eva's heart, and the dross had fallen away. No rankling feeling lingered. Was a resurrection possible?

The next afternoon, punctual to his appointment, he called, and was shown into the studio. He observed at once that he had guessed we were artists (artists alone have the privilege of being, if they choose, emphatically Bohemian and emphatically respectable at the same time). I sent Frau Richter to summon Eva.

'The artist is my companion, not myself,' said I; 'and I must tell you that you will be surprised to find in her an old acquaintance.'

'Indeed!' he said, with just a passing shadow of solicitude he could not hide upon his face, tempting me to prolong his mystification. What inconvenient souvenirs were going to be raked up now? I was merciful.

'As an artist also you may recollect her name,' I rejoined carelessly. 'Miss Severn—Eva Severn.'

Tell it not in Gath! For one awful moment he searched the book of his memory in vain. The next he remembered.

'Ah, but I ought to have guessed that too, and directly,' glancing rapidly round the walls of the studio. 'I should have known from all these delightful studies; always her favourite subjects, I recollect, of old.'

Evidently Mr. Grey was not a man easily put out. When Eva herself joined us, the scene after the first moment went more easily, naturally, and pleasantly than I

should have thought possible before.

Next to a pocketful of ready money, there is nothing on earth so invaluable, or that tides a man gracefully over such awkward situations, as a stock of really interesting ready-made conversation on any and every subject. Taking Eva's pictures for a starting-point, Mr. Grey quickly, insensibly carried us all off delicate ground. He had once, he said, made birds' nests and birds' eggs his special study, and entertained us with a quantity of amusing anecdotes, gossip, and clever suggestions, whilst we let the time slip by unheeded. Then suddenly the clock struck, and he discovered that it was late, sprang up, and took leave of us in haste. But we should meet again, he said; he was settled in Ludwigsheim for the winter.

Vaguely during the last half-hour I had been looking forward to a renewal of old relations between him and Eva; seen ahead, to explanations, mutual forgiveness, reunion at last. This for them. For myself, a vision of

'gooseberry picking' extraordinary. I should sit by, cultivating an unfelt presence, eyes that should not see, ears that should not hear, and a heart that should understand nothing until it was told.

But the moment he was gone Eva turned to me with a sigh, saying significantly,

'I should not have known him.'

'Is he so gone off, then?' I asked, surprised.

'Not gone off exactly, but—'

'Gone on' would perhaps better have expressed her meaning.

After ten years—during which he had been rubbing shoulders with the world and undergoing who knows what fashioning and changing at its hands, and Eva, comparatively, standing still, cloistered apart—these ex-lovers meet. But the old relation between them has ceased to exist. Another meeting or two, and my premature resolutions of learning to play third had to be dismissed with a smile as uncalled for, to give place ere long to impressions of altogether a contrary nature.

(To be continued.)

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

UNDERGROUND RAILWAYS.

THERE are about sixteen miles of underground railway in London. Each mile cost on an average three-quarters of a million. Their converging lines produce an enormous daily concentration on the business parts of London. They have materially lightened the traffic of the streets. They have abbreviated the daily travel and general processes of business. If people would only take things quietly all the aids of modern civilisation would make life easier and pleasanter. But unfortunately they quicken the pace and march of the times. People will not take things quietly. This underground railway makes us live all the faster. The average man of business does not use his underground railway wisely. He takes his breakfast hastily and undigestedly. He hears the rumble, and sees the smoke in the distance, and hurries forward. Every year a certain number of people are killed by running to catch the train. Then the kind of railway travelling is rather peculiar. Half the time on a railway journey is spent in drawing up at the never-ending railway stations. The effect on the human system must be very much the same as the perpetual stopping of the omnibus upon its horses. There is no vertebrate system in the universe that can altogether resist the effects of perpetual jerks.

Two of our most accomplished physicians have discussed the medical effects of railway travelling. These are Dr. J. C. B. Williams, and Dr. Richardson, in

his well-known volume on the *Diseases of Modern Life*. The last writer dwells mainly on the sanitary, and the first on the medical, aspect of the subject. Without any doubt the daily journey in the dark 'takes it out' of you. One looks upon it with dread, endures it with weariness, and has sensations of being tired after it. It is by no means lost time. One skims through the morning paper, or is provided with a volume from the library. The morning conversation too, as far as the jerky train permits of broken dialogue, is to me always interesting. The public opinion of a railway carriage is as good an index to popular judgments as the talk of a club. But by the time that a man has reached his place of business he feels that a good deal of the day's business is done. The tripod of life—heart, brain, lungs—has each had some resistance to encounter. The incursions are slight, but being incessant amount ultimately to something considerable.

Without being in any degree an alarmist, we must still say that there are sanitary considerations attending underground railway travelling which are well worthy of consideration. When the railway runs through a tunnel there is an atmosphere of a most deleterious kind. The atmosphere of a crowded theatre is charged with a large amount of carbonic-acid gas—from two to three per cent, a dangerous proportion if inhaled for a long time. Great mortality has prevailed in hospitals where, upon analysis of the air, this proportion has been found to exist. The

tunnel is more or less impregnated with carbonic-oxide gas, arising from imperfect combustion, which is much more deleterious, and of which one per cent would be fatal. A well-known medical man tells us that he was informed that some of the men were carried out insensible, arising from the carbonic acid and the carbonic oxide. At certain times of the day the carriages are over-crowded, many persons standing, which greatly adds to the mischief. The poison taken into the system by respiration acts most insidiously, and a traveller may carry away from a railway carriage a poison which may linger in the system for years. A curious illustration of the effects of the carbonic-acid gas may be seen in the case of the fine ladies at the end of the London season. There has been a superabundance of carbonic-acid gas at theatres, opera-houses, and balls, and our belles seem, by a sort of natural instinct, to resort to the seaside, where they eliminate the noxious gases and regain their roses through the oxygen and ozone.

We cannot but think the railway companies might act a little more handsomely towards the public. At some times of the day you may see a dozen people standing up in a third-class compartment. The company would take it very ill if the people should seat themselves in first-class carriages. It is hard lines to make them wait twenty minutes for the next train, and the next train also may be full. The companies are eager to get a conviction against passengers, and are very fond of placarding the convicted. But the companies never placard the convictions which are obtained against themselves. It would be odd, though salutary, if we had the stations placarded with ingenuous confessions of having been fined hundreds

or thousands of pounds on account of accidents caused by carelessness and blunders. But in spite of all precautions we are afraid that a great deal of fraud is inflicted upon the companies. We do not impute fraud to those who, holding any ticket, will jump into any carriage rather than miss the train. But there are a considerable number of people who, with confused ideas of right and wrong, or thinking with Charles Lamb that it is no particular offence to defraud a company, habitually seat themselves in a higher class than they have paid for. The companies do their best to right themselves, but it is hard work. Sometimes they make a sudden raid, and demand tickets. A very lady-like woman sat in a first-class carriage, whose fingers were playing with a third-class ticket: when she heard the summons the ticket was secreted in her glove, and the lady was promptly fast asleep. The ticket-collector was too polite to awake the slumbering lady. There is a great deal of life and character and by-play in these trains. In the morning and the evening they are full of business people; but in other hours of the day the ladies come out for their shopping, and people are social and conversational.

One great means of improving matters would be if many people who habitually use the Underground should vary their use of it. Where an habitual use is prejudicial an occasional use may be beneficial. The omnibus will often save friction and waiting, and it gives one the open air. Better still, now that the mornings are becoming fine, is the brisk walk—but not the heated walk against time—from the suburb to the City. There is nothing more healthful, both for body and mind, than the morning walk after breakfast. We have known business men who have positively carried

on a distinct line of education during their morning walk into town. We do not wish to depreciate the conveniences of the underground lines. We only wish that the District shares and the Metropolitan were equally good and profitable. But the railway engine, though a good servant, is a terrible master; we should use it in moderation, and not be altogether dependent on it. The first-class carriage is always the best, as the padding lessens sensation, and there is the greatest security against accident.

SCIENCE IN ITS RELATION TO FOOD AND CULINARY MATTERS.

Now that cookery-schools have become one of the recognised institutions of the day, and ladies rejoice to transmute themselves for the time being into neat-handed Phyllises intent on preparing a savoury soup or omelette, or in cooking a beefsteak or an apple-dumpling as such things should be done, a considerable amount of interest attaches to the character of the various kinds of food-stuffs, and the ways in which they are prepared. It is not unusual in various establishments to employ Liebig's extract of beef largely in the manufacture of gravies, soups, and the like; and so long as the material is used only to give *body* to the product, and as an accompaniment to other and more nutritious substances, no objection can be raised to its employment in such ways. But it is otherwise when this substance is used as an article of food by itself, as a means, for example, of rapidly preparing beef-tea for a hasty lunch or for an invalid. By pouring hot water over a tea-spoonful of Liebig's extract, and flavouring with salt, pepper, Worcester sauce, and the like, a cupful of a beverage or broth, of flavour highly palatable to most people, is speedily pre-

pared; unless, however, this be eaten with a slice of bread or toast, or a biscuit or two, but little substantial nutriment is derived from the slight snack thus prepared; whilst for an invalid, whose condition requires the frequent administration of small quantities of nutritive food, and for whom beef-tea is accordingly ordered, such a potion is quite as likely to do harm as good. It is a common error to suppose that, because it requires about thirty pounds of beef to prepare one pound of extract, therefore one pound of extract contains all the nutritive power of thirty pounds of fresh beef; the difference is simply this, that ordinary meat contains, in addition to various substances dissolved in the aqueous liquor of the juices of flesh, a large amount of substances not so dissolved, and constituting the great bulk of the material. These bodies, in the ordinary course of digestion, become assimilated and are actually nutritive, but in Liebig's extract they are wholly absent. On the other hand, in the condensed meat extract various substances possessing high physiological activity, and acting largely on the nervous system (such as creatine and other flesh-alkaloids, potassium salts, and the like), are present in considerable quantity; they act more as stimulants to the stomach, aiding digestion, than as true food, being comparable to some extent in their action to wine and other alcoholic beverages. If to a delicate patient little be administered but stimulants, the function of which is simply to aid in the digestion of other substances, clearly the same nutritive effect is not produced as would be were a food of a different character given containing more of the digestible matters, and less of the stimulating and saline ingredients. Such substances, though valuable when

given in conjunction with true food-stuffs, as aiding in the digestion and assimilation of the latter, are more to be regarded as substitutes for tea, coffee, wine, and the like than as true nutritive agents. Beef-tea made properly from fresh beef is different in character from that prepared from the concentrated meat-juice. Although, of course, it contains the same stimulating agents, it also has in addition a large amount of the truly digestible matters—albumen, gelatine, and the like—differing in fact from the entire meat simply in containing none of the insoluble forms of fibrine, &c., which constitute the solid portion of the muscular tissue, left undissolved in the stew-pan. A good process for the preparation of a nutritive and invigorating beef-tea is to shred the lean into small pieces, and very gently stew (not boiling) for several hours in an oven in a pan or basin, a few slices of turnip and just enough water to cover the whole being added, together with a little salt. Extract of milk, or condensed milk, is a substance differing entirely in its nature from extract of beef; this substance contains the whole of the nutriment originally present in the milk, only differing therefrom in that a certain quantity of sugar is added as a preservative before subjecting the milk to the process of concentration in a vacuum pan; for dietetic purposes for children and others, the condensed substance can be safely used wherever ordinary cows' milk is admissible.

The use of tinned meats, fruits, &c., is now very general; as a rule, the substances sold are of admirable quality. It sometimes happens, however, that the acid juice of fruits acts on the metal canister, causing the preserved fruit to become impregnated with metallic compounds which sometimes are

present in so large a quantity as to cause considerable illness after partaking of food prepared from such materials. Compounds of zinc have been met with in tinned foods, due to the use by the tinman of chloride of zinc during the soldering up of the cans, this substance having the power of causing the solder to flow readily, and being often used for that purpose. Similarly new tin tea-kettles have been known to cause illness, owing to the omission of the precaution of thoroughly rinsing out with hot water the new kettle before its first use, and the consequent non-removal of adhering chloride of zinc. Danger from this cause, however, though not altogether absent, is not frequent, powdered resin and other inert substances being more generally employed as a flux during soldering. Certain acid fruit-juices, however, such as that of the apple (containing the vegetable acid termed *malic acid*, from its occurrence in that fruit), occasionally corrode and dissolve the metal of a tin canister, and so become impregnated with deleterious matters. The writer has known three distinct metals to be thus introduced simultaneously: tin in the largest quantity, from the action of the acid on the tin surface of the canister (what is ordinarily termed *tinplate* used for such purposes is thin sheet iron coated over on the surface with tin); lead to a minute extent, due either to the presence of small quantities of lead in the tin employed in coating the iron (a not infrequent impurity or adulteration in commercial tin of low quality), or to the action of the acid on the soldered junctions of the can, solder being an alloy of lead and tin; and finally, small quantities of iron, due to the partial corrosion of the sheet iron underlying the tin surface. In a recent case that came

under his observation, the amount of tin present was sufficient to render seriously unwell each person partaking of a small quantity of an apple-tart made from tinned apples; although the colic produced was in these cases only of some hours' duration, still that finale to dinner is not quite so agreeable as to be eminently desirable.

The amount of metallic poisons introduced into foods of various kinds, and consumed in small quantities by the community, is considerably larger than at first sight might be supposed. Besides intentional adulterations of vegetables with copper (such as preserved peas, pickles, and the like) for the purpose of preserving a bright green colour, this metal is not infrequently introduced into foods of various kinds by the use by the cook of a rusty penny-piece to boil with the greens in order to cause them to keep their colour, and not infrequently through deficient cleanliness in the matter of brass stew-pans, saucepans, &c.; greasy substances in particular, when left in contact with copper or brass, frequently cause the metal to rust or oxidise, with the formation of verdigris, which stains the fat, &c., more or less green. Lead, however, is the metal most commonly introduced into the system, from the use of lead pipes for conveying water, and the presence of that metal in various alloys, and in the manufacture of appliances for preparing various articles of food or beverages. Thus soda-water not infrequently contains lead, introduced from the metal of the aerating apparatus; the wines (!) sold as champagne of lower qualities have been known to be contaminated with a dangerous amount of the same noxious metal similarly introduced in the process of aerating the artificial concoction which serves as the basis. Various kinds

of bottled fruits, &c., kept in cap-suled vessels have been known to become impregnated with lead by the contact of the materials with the capsule; even ordinary wine and beer bottles are frequently cleansed for re-use by shaking shot in them, and particles of lead occasionally get detached from the shot and remain in the bottles after rinsing, or shot get wedged in at the heel of the bottle, and consequently gradually contaminate with lead the substances subsequently placed in the bottle. The pipes that supply the beer and spirit fountains of public-houses are often of lead, or of a composition containing lead; and the liquids drawn off the first thing in the morning, having been in contact with the metal pipe all night, are apt to contain notable quantities of lead. Indeed, serious cases of lead-poisoning have been traced to the frequent imbibition of such liquids by persons whose taste or employment is of such a nature as to lead them to take their morning draughts as soon as the public-houses open. To remedy this latter evil, a special kind of tubing is now manufactured, consisting of a core of pure tin (not so readily affected by such liquids as lead), with an outside thick coating of lead; and such tin-lined lead tubes are much to be recommended for conveying potable water into dwelling-houses, especially when the water is very soft, or when from its peculiar nature it acts rapidly on lead.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS IN REFERENCE TO WOMEN.

The question as to whether there is any natural reason other than prejudice why women should not exercise and carry on several of the professions and occupations hitherto regarded as more peculiarly the province of the male sex, is

one admitting of a large amount of discussion, and concerning which very diverse opinions are held. The advocates of free trade in such matters argue that until it is actually proved by the experience of a considerable period that women are, as a class, actually inferior to men in the ability requisite to carry on any particular calling, it should be open to those of them who desire so to do to qualify themselves by appropriate study, &c., for such vocations as they think proper, and to carry on those occupations without let or hindrance, and without fear or favour; that as such methods of procedure are now the exception, and not the rule, it is unfair to judge of the capabilities of women generally by the success, or otherwise, of those few of them who endeavour to exercise professions, and like callings, in spite of the difficulties naturally occurring to those engaged in a novel experiment, as well as the further hindrances intentionally thrown in their way by ungenerous opponents. Those who take the opposite view of the question maintain, or at least assert, that from the character of her organisation woman is less apt than man to acquire certain branches of knowledge and certain kinds of experience, and that she is necessarily deficient in nerve and presence of mind in difficult and trying circumstances; that her physical strength is not uniformly equal to the exigencies of professional life; and that there are numerous practical difficulties in the way of appropriately training her for many of the occupations requiring special kinds of instruction and experience: they further point to the circumstances that hitherto very few women have made a mark in pursuits of what is ordinarily termed a masculine character, and that in certain occupations (*e.g.* telegraph-offices, railway booking-

offices, and the like) the experiment has been tried of having female clerks, &c., and was found to be unsuccessful, either from the bodily strength of the employées not being equal to the demands put upon it, or from other inabilities inherent in the physical and mental constitution of the sex. Without attempting to decide a question admitting of so much debate, it may be noticed that the desire on the part of ladies for education of a high character is steadily growing, and that the female candidates who present themselves for examination, as a very general rule, acquit themselves in such a way as would be eminently creditable to persons of the sterner sex; that educational bodies of the highest rank, where they do not admit females to the ordinary courses of instruction originally intended for males only, frequently provide special classes for lady students; and that some of the diploma and certificate-granting bodies of the highest class have opened a few of their degrees to women, and award certificates of proficiency to both sexes alike. For example, in the University of Oxford ladies do frequently attend the regular courses of lectures of some of the professors; at Cambridge the same thing occurs, owing to the fact that the ladies' colleges (Girton College and Newnham Hall) cannot provide sufficient accommodation for the candidates who apply for admission; whilst the instruction given in these colleges is, to a large extent, imparted by the same lecturers and teachers who carry on the male classes in the University colleges. The London University, and the Queen's University in Ireland, have opened some of their degrees to women; the Edinburgh University professors have co-operated with the Ladies' Educational Association in arranging classes in Latin, English literature, political

economy, moral philosophy, mathematics, and physiology, these classes being under the sanction of the *Senatus Academicus*, and being taught exclusively by the University professors, or by extra-academical lecturers recognised by the University. Certificates of proficiency are granted to such female candidates as can pass the examinations for women instituted by the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, London, and Edinburgh; at Cambridge women have been recently allowed to subject themselves to examinations in the papers of the ordinary tripos, and several have distinguished themselves by obtaining such marks as would have entitled them, had they been men, to high places in the honours-lists; whilst University College, London, Manchester New College, and the New University College at Bristol admit lady students to many of their classes, and in some instances have instituted separate classes for ladies; and, in all probability, similar arrangements will shortly be effected at The Owens College, Manchester; this liberality of spirit and action having been fully contemplated by the provisions under which the original college, founded by Mr. Owens, was extended, and a strong movement in favour of the establishment of classes for female students in the college being now on foot in Manchester.

What is to be the outcome of this demand for intellectual development on the part of what we are in the habit of calling the weaker sex? Shall we in the course of a few years see, in addition to medical women, female barristers and parsons and lady apothecaries and judges? Will the Army and Navy or the Engineer Corps find that lady officers can be quite as useful as, and not less ornamental than, subalterns in the Household Bri-

gade; or that they will not cause worse shipping disasters than the loss of the Captain, the *Mistletoe* catastrophe, or the *Vanguard* disaster? Will the leading chairs and professorships in our Universities be equally shared between the two sexes? Or will the eloquence of a Disraeli, the desire for peace of a Bright, or the vagaries and hobbies of a Whalley or a Keene be equalled or surpassed by the similar attributes of female politicians? Or will the effect of the rapidly-increasing tendency to over-mental excitement on the part, not only of our adults, but also of our adolescents of both sexes, be, as some pessimists endeavour to make out, to diminish the physical stamina of our cultivated classes in future generations, to shorten the average duration of their life, and to over-people our *maisons de santé*? Or shall we simply see a race of refined and cultivated women springing up, able to take pleasure in reading classical authors in the original, in following the developments of philological inquiry, the discoveries of modern science, or the abstruse reasonings of our advanced mathematicians; to whom an instrumental concert affords, not only artistic pleasures from the 'concord of sweet sounds,' but intellectual ones, derived from the remembrance of chapters from Helmholtz' text-book of overtones, and the correlations between acoustical science and the undulatory theory of light; and to whom a coloured silk dress suggests, not only what a good match that 'love of a bonnet' bought yesterday would make for it, and how hideous Mrs. Jones would look in such a costume, but also the wonderful processes by which the gloriously-tinted fabric was produced from the secretion of a caterpillar, and dyed by means of substances extracted from coal-tar

by a succession of chemical changes, each one as curious as beautiful! In fine, will women, having now got as it were the first foot on the ladder of intellectual progress, rush rapidly onward, and perchance lose all advantages by over-eagerness to rival and out-do men in all departments; or will they quietly and slowly push onwards, and leave to time to decide fairly whether or no there are certain occupations and departments of usefulness which an average woman cannot fulfil, by reason of her sex alone, as well as an average man? No doubt there will be revolutionary enthusiasts and advocates of progress too rapid for safety amongst the alumni (or alumnae, should we say?) of the rising training-schools for female thought; but if we may judge by the quiet earnestness of purpose and apparent love of knowledge for its own sake that has characterised during the last few years the development of the movement for the higher education of women, we can scarcely doubt that the same wise moderation will be a conspicuous feature in the future, and that most of the evils prophesied as the sure outcome of this desire for intellectual cultivation will exist only in the fervid imaginations of the false prophets. *Palnam qui meruit ferat!*

ADULTERATION OF SILK.

Some newspaper correspondence has recently taken place on the general subject of silks for ladies' dresses, from which it would appear that silk manufacturers are not unfrequently addicted to the worship of what Mr. Carlyle calls 'the great god of shoddy, adulteration, and malfecance,' and that they often vend wares the production of which aims at the combination of 'slimness, mendacity, and profit,' described by this authority as the

object sought in the 'heartfelt though unspoken prayers' of the votaries of that deity. Silks, it would appear, are now sent into the market so heavily weighted with gummy and other matters in the dyeing or preparing of the fabrics, that the true silk-fibre only constitutes a third or even a fourth of the finished article; the object of these additions being to give a fictitious thickness and richness to the material, the result of which is that the true fibre is strained and ruptured, not only by the extra weight thus put upon it, but also by the chemical and mechanical weakening effect of the substances thus made to adhere to it; in other words, such silks will not wear well, but soon cut and become shabby-looking. Not only, however, is the silk material thus artfully manipulated; fibre of jute and other textile materials skilfully prepared so as to have a silky lustre are intermingled in large proportions with those of the true silk. Not improbably the admixture is advantageous rather than deleterious from the point of view of giving strength and tenacity to the loaded fabric; but a dress of which half is dye and loading matter, and part of the rest jute and matters foreign to silk, is not a proper article to be sold as silk. It is only fair, however, to state that the manufacturers and silk-sellers reply that the taste for cheap and showy silks having largely increased of late years, they are compelled to meet the demand for articles of the kind required; that it is impossible to produce genuine silks not heavily loaded with foreign materials at the price for which the fabrics are demanded. Genuine silks are still made by some few manufacturers, and of various qualities; but if a purchaser wishes to obtain at the price of a second-class silk the

appearance of a first-class one, it must not be expected that the goods sold are altogether what they appear to be. In order to test whether a silk contains fibre of jute or not, it suffices to hold a fragment of the material over a candle; the true silk-threads will only smoulder, the false ones will blaze. If ladies in purchasing silks of moderate price will pick out a material which is thin and leathery to the touch, and will be satisfied with a cord of a quality commensurate with the price paid, they will find that they still can buy materials that will wear well, although they will not be as handsome when new as other more adulterated articles.

OPTOGRAMS.

An experiment has been recently performed which, although causing no actual suffering beyond the possible pain attending instantaneous decapitation, would probably be decried by the tender-hearted sentimentalists whose zeal for the suppression of animal suffering leads to the papering of our hoardings with enlarged transcriptions of cuts from physiological works, whilst the pain undergone by pigeons and other birds, &c., shot and otherwise killed or maimed in the interest of 'sport,' and the 'agony' daily inflicted on sheep and other animals by the butcher in dressing them for the table, meet with no sort of remonstrance. In order to obtain evidence as to whether the objects last seen in life cause a permanent impression on the retina remaining after death, a rabbit was placed near an opening in a window-shutter, the opening being thirty centimètres square (about one foot square), and the rabbit one and a half mètres (nearly five feet) distant: the rabbit's head was covered by a black cloth for five minutes, and then the

cloth removed from one eye, so that the animal was kept looking at the window for three minutes on a cloudy day. The head was then instantaneously cut off, and the eye that had been exposed was extirpated (the apartment being illuminated by yellow light) and instantly plunged in a five per cent solution of alum. Two minutes after death, the head containing the other eye, which had not been exposed to light, was similarly turned to the opening in the shutter; after three minutes, this eye was also extirpated and placed in alum as before. The next morning the toughened retinæ of the two eyes were carefully dissected out. They exhibited on the anterior sides nearly square sharply-defined images; that on the retina of the first eye, which beheld the object during life, was slightly roseate in tint and was a little less sharply defined than that in the second, which was perfectly white, the rest of each retina being rose-red. Each image was rather larger than one square millimètre, or about one three-hundredth of the linear dimensions of the actual object. This experiment, first performed by Kühne, has been repeated and verified by Dr. Gamgee of Birmingham. It is proposed to call the permanent retinal impression thus produced an 'optogram.'

NEW ORDNANCE.

The largest breech-loading gun hitherto constructed in this country has been recently completed by Sir W. G. Armstrong & Co.; it weighs almost 40 tons, is of 12-inch calibre, and is constructed on the coil system. The breech mechanism consists of a removable screw so cut away in the thread as to take a full hold on completing one-sixth of a turn. The gas-check used in this weapon

is a kind of steel cup resting on the convex head of the breech-screw; this cup is pressed against a shoulder in the gun by the breech-screw in such a way that the lip is expanded against the circular internal surface of the bore; being elastic, the cup recovers its shape as soon as the screw is undone, and so is immediately removable. With a charge of 180 pounds of pebble-powder this projectile gains a velocity of about 1650 feet per second, the highest pressure being 19 tons per square inch. The projectiles are neither studded nor leaded, but have a copper band round the base; this is forced into the grooves, and acts perfectly in the way of compelling the projectile to follow the grooving. The Italian Government have ordered a number of guns on the same pattern as this 40-ton gun, but of smaller sizes; many of these have already been supplied.

NEW BOOKS.

It is a great pleasure to be able to give hearty and unrestricted applause to a new work; and that is a pleasure which we may enjoy without the least reserve in giving a hearty welcome to Miss Edwards' book on the Nile.* It might have been thought that Nile literature could hardly have received so valuable an addition at this late date, and arising from such fortuitous circumstances. For Miss Edwards was literally driven from France by stress of bad weather, and like many other travellers then sought for relief in the serene skies and clear air of Egypt. In the case of this accomplished authoress, the eye and the hand work harmoniously together. Her book contains no less than seventy illustrations engraved on wood after finished drawings executed on the

* *A Thousand Miles up the Nile.* By Amelia B. Edwards. (Longmans.)

spot by herself. There is a great deal of variety in the contents, that are concerned both with the incidents of the hour and with history and archaeology. The breadth of Egypt is just the breadth of fertile soil on either side of the flood; sometimes we are on the outlying desert, oftener on the Nilotic oasis—'here where the grass is green, and the palms are growing, and the Arabs build their hovels on the verge of the inundation.' From Memphis the journey proceeds, broken occasionally at places of interest: at Minieh, where Christmas was spent; at Siout, whose inhabitants are 'the most unappeasable beggars out of Ireland;' at Thebes and Karnak, whose beauties are too numerous to be all seen now, and must be glanced at again on the homeward voyage—till at last, arriving at Assouan, 'one bids good-bye to Egypt, and enters Nubia through the gates of the Cataract.' Here the scenery changes. 'In Egypt the valley is often so wide that one forgets the stony waste beyond the cornlands. But in Nubia the desert is ever present. We cannot forget it if we would. The barren mountains press upon our path, showering down avalanches of granite on the one side and torrents of yellow sand on the other. We know that those stones are always falling; that those sands are always drifting; that the river has hard work to hold its own; and that the desert is silently encroaching day by day.' The beauty of the Nubian sand is admirably described: 'smooth, sheeny, satiny; fine as diamond-dust; supple, undulating, luminous, it lies in the most exquisite curves and wreaths, like a snow-drift turned to gold. Remodelled by every breath that blows, its ever-varying surface presents an endless play of delicate lights and shadows. There lives

not the sculptor who could render these curves; and I doubt whether Turner himself, in his tenderest and subtlest mood, could have done justice to those complex grays and ambers.' As a specimen of the author's finest style, breathing the loftiest feeling, we may give a short extract from the account of the Great Temple at Abou Simbel: 'It is a wonderful place to be alone in—a place in which the very darkness and silence are old, and in which Time himself seems to have fallen asleep. Wandering to and fro among these sculptured halls, like a shade among shadows, one seems to have left the world behind; to have done with the teachings of the present; to belong oneself to the past. The very gods assert their influence over those who question them in solitude. Seen in the fast-deepening gloom of evening, they look instinct with supernatural life. There were times when I could scarcely have been surprised to hear them speak—to see them rise from their painted thrones and come down from the walls. There were times when I felt I believed in them.' The work may be most confidently recommended to all readers.

Mrs. Caddy's work on household organisation* is one of considerable value. The good sense that pervades it throughout will commend itself to every reader. Her attention has been drawn to the subject mainly by the prevailing want of good servants. Her main remedy is that people should wait upon themselves and each other. She is full of methods for abbreviating labour, and is of opinion that each gentleman should empty his own bath, and the boys of the house should do their own boots. She speaks more favourably of the institution of lady-helps than we had

expected would be the case. The young ladies of a house are the real lady-helps, and where there is no young lady of the house a lady-help should be procured. Mrs. Caddy does not, however, discuss a very serious point, namely, how to test and secure efficiency in the lady-help. We heard of some worthy people lately who obtained a couple of lady-helps whom they brought home in great triumph and a first-class carriage. The young ladies were nice well-mannered girls; but the professed cook knew nothing about cooking, and the professed housemaid could only fold her hands and look interesting. Mrs. Caddy discusses the dining-room, but she has not much to say about dinners, except giving the good advice that housewives should always follow the good things of the season, and not care for forced and early luxuries. What she says about 'the education of girls' is sensible and practical, although it will hardly satisfy the advocates of the 'higher education of women.' There are few households where something may not be learned from a little book like this. The subject is one of the weak points of English life. Sir Arthur Helps once wrote a charming essay on the same subject, and it seems to us that both his teaching and much of Mr. Ruskin's are well illustrated in Mrs. Caddy's useful volume.

We must fall back, after the strong intellectual stimulus administered by Miss Edwards and Mrs. Caddy, on the comparative recreation afforded by a couple of stories.* These are somewhat contrasted in tone and treatment. The 'bride' is a young lady half-

* *A Bride from Rhineland.* Three vols. (Sampson Low, Marston, & Co.)

The Château de Vesinet: a Memory of France. By the Author of *Cinderella: a New Version of an Old Story.* (Chapman & Hall.)

* *Household Organisation.* By Mrs. Caddy. (Chapman & Hall.)

English by blood, who resides with her father, a German painter, at Rudesheim on the Rhine. A clever English tourist, Sir Arthur Mordaunt, meets her on his travels, falls immediately in love with her, and marries her off-hand. This is natural enough; but the story is a little complicated by a German lover, who, not being successful, loads her with a malediction which is painfully wrought out in the course of the story. For a time all goes well. The young bride, whose imagination had always been fired by descriptions and thoughts of England, is perfectly happy. But the mother-in-law and sister-in-law conspire against her, represent her among their acquaintances as an idiot and an incubus, drive her to attempt suicide, take all the colour and brightness out of her life, and render her perfectly crushed and miserable. We will hope that in real life such monsters are not seen, and that the author's descriptions are over-charged. By and by a celebrated Mr. Alford comes on the stage, who has been an ambassador; he thoroughly appreciates the neglected wife, becomes one of the 'married woman's admirers,' and eventually elopes with her. After the elopement comes the inevitable desertion, and the poor Rhineland bride goes back to Rhineland to die. Of course the author lets us see evil in its proper colours. But in making the conduct of the husband execrable, and concentrating all our sympathies on the erring wife—very much as Thackeray does in his *Lord and Lady Highbury*—we think she errs against the legitimate purpose of a novel. Still the novel is a very good one as novels go, and we may fairly expect a still abler performance hereafter from the writer's pen. Her descriptions of Rhineland, and of

the stately exterior of a great English house, leave little to be desired, and the analysis of the workings of a broken heart is only too painfully true to nature.

The *Château de Vesinet* is well written, fairly interesting, and most commendably moral. Like the other story, there is foreign colouring. The narrative is sufficiently interesting to fairly gain the attention of the reader, without being open to the reproach of being too exciting. The brevity of the tale is a good feature, and one which will be fully appreciated by those who deem it their duty to read every work of fiction that appears. Each incident is recorded in the briefest manner possible, and the most cursory reader will find no pages to skip. The heroine's assumed name—for the story is written in the first person—is Lilian Gray, and her history is recounted from the cradle to her wedding. It is her fortunate lot in the early stage of infancy to be left in a basket at the house of a benevolent doctor, who rears her as his niece. This worthy man is an Englishman, though residing at St. Germain, which may, perhaps, explain why the author is so uncertain whether she ought to call him her uncle in plain English, or *mon oncle*. As it is, he is referred to in both languages about an equal number of times.

The moral teaching of the book ought not to be overlooked, for it is clearly intended to occupy a prominent place. The contrast between the characters is always sharply drawn, and the author's praise is reserved for those whose actions proceed from a serious sense of duty. It is so refreshing to come across a book with this tendency that we shall not complain a great deal if the author leaves us in doubt whether waltzing is to be regarded as a very heinous

offence. Lillian's conscience was certainly uneasy on the subject, but we can hardly think that her absent lover would have objected very much if he had been at home instead of abroad. Probably most of the readers of this book will have formed their opinions already on this important question.

It is one of the favourable aspects of our age that books characterised by earnestness and gravity of tone do not fail to find their audience. Such a book as Dr. Tyerman's *Life of George Whitefield** indeed deserves study on many accounts. Dr. Tyerman, having completed his *Lives of the Wesleys* with conspicuous success, has appropriately addressed himself to the great companion biography of those times. Apart from the personal and religious interest of the work, which is very great, Dr. Tyerman's works give the most complete picture of the eighteenth century with which we are acquainted. He has not, in any sense, given us a work of art in a finished literary biography. The charm of the book is, that the author brings together his material from the oddest and remotest sources. Whitefield being very much in debt in America, the Charleston people gave him several hundred pounds. The holy man bought land and negroes, and became a slave-holder and planter. By and by he hears of the awakening of several negroes, and also hopes 'to be delivered from outward embarrassments;' and in the mean time continues to be 'hunting after poor lost sinners in these un-gospelised wilds.' As we look back on his address and condition we are not altogether surprised that one of his contemporaries, who, of course, could not know the unity and greatness of his career, de-

nounced him as 'a strolling impostor whose cheats, in due time, will be discovered.' In due time, a character of altogether different description has been discovered. His seven visits to America—where he died at last—were events of national importance, and this name of the greatest preacher of modern times has become a sacred link of association between two continents. His connection with the Countess of Huntingdon brings new scenes before us, reminding us much of recent revivals. Lady Huntingdon became his 'female prelate.' He is preaching a whole day at her house at Chelsea—'there seems a door opening for the nobility to hear the gospel. . . . The prospect of catching sons of the rich in the gospel-net is very promising.' The most brilliant and fashionable assemblies in London delighted to hear him preach. The influence of his eloquence was most extraordinary. Even David Hume, the sceptic, went twenty miles to hear him preach. That old heathen, Lord Chesterfield, gave him a bow, and said, 'Sir, I will not tell you what I shall tell others, how I approve of you.' George I. told his Archbishop of Canterbury, who is now forgotten, while Whitefield is remembered, that the only way to stop his preaching was to elevate him to the bench.' A number of fashionable ladies, wits, and beauties surrounded him. It was a frightful blow to Lady Huntingdon when her kinsman, Lord Ferrers, was hung for murder; and Whitefield preached and prayed. Foote and Garrick lampooned him on the stage, and one of the noblest of Cowper's poems was a stern rebuke of their calumnies. Dr. Tyerman's books, besides other and higher claims to attention, are a perfect repertory of the social life and traditions of the English people in the last century.

* *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield, B.A., of Pembroke College, Oxford.* By Rev. L. Tyerman. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

We are glad to see that Mr. Teignmouth Shore's book* is passing through several editions. In our judgment he hardly impinges on the real difficulties of thoughtful men of our day; indeed we are not sure that he has fully sounded them. But he is clear and final in his own beliefs, and is fruitful in suggestions that will confirm such beliefs in others. The tone of eminent fairness and of thorough sympathy which pervades the book makes it extremely attractive; and a certain amount of eloquence and imagery is also very helpful. Of the annotations we do not think so very much. The two last sermons belong to a class which we should like to see more common in the pulpit. They have the pleasing titles of 'Town and Country Life' and 'English Society.' The congregation at Berkeley Chapel would especially appreciate this order of sermon, which might indeed be cultivated to advantage in other pulpits. Mr. Shore's volume may be recommended as an especially winning form of enouncing the purest and highest truth.

Mr. Shadwell's *System of Political Economy*† is a very remarkable work. It is a work of science; it is also a work of general literature. The best writers on political economy are Adam Smith, Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill; and although Mr. Shadwell has

hardly the originality and brilliancy of these great writers, he is an extremely interesting and instructive writer. Indeed a work of this massive character and sustained execution is one which on every account deserves a welcome and a place in the world of letters. We cannot say that we always agree with our author; but we differ from him with reluctance and respect. Mr. Shadwell appears to think that we should do better without our colonial empire, which on financial grounds may be true enough; but on imperial grounds the theory is not so much as worth listening to. Mr. Shadwell points out that in the history of strikes it has frequently occurred that want of good temper and good manners, more than any other reason, has precipitated strikes on the part of masters or men. Mr. Shadwell also holds that the Joint-Stock banks should have power to issue notes like the Bank of England, although the Bank of England is confessedly on a different footing from every other bank. Mr. Shadwell does not at all believe in any scheme for the State buying the railways. He acutely says that as the managers would not have the same interest in securing economy, there would be as much waste from carelessness as there now is from misdirected zeal. Many of Mr. Shadwell's views are antagonistic to received opinions; but they all relate to subjects well worth discussion, and where the discussion can hardly fail to be fruitful for public good.

* *Some Difficulties of Belief*. By the Rev. T. Teignmouth Shore, M.A. (Cassell, Petter, & Galpin.)

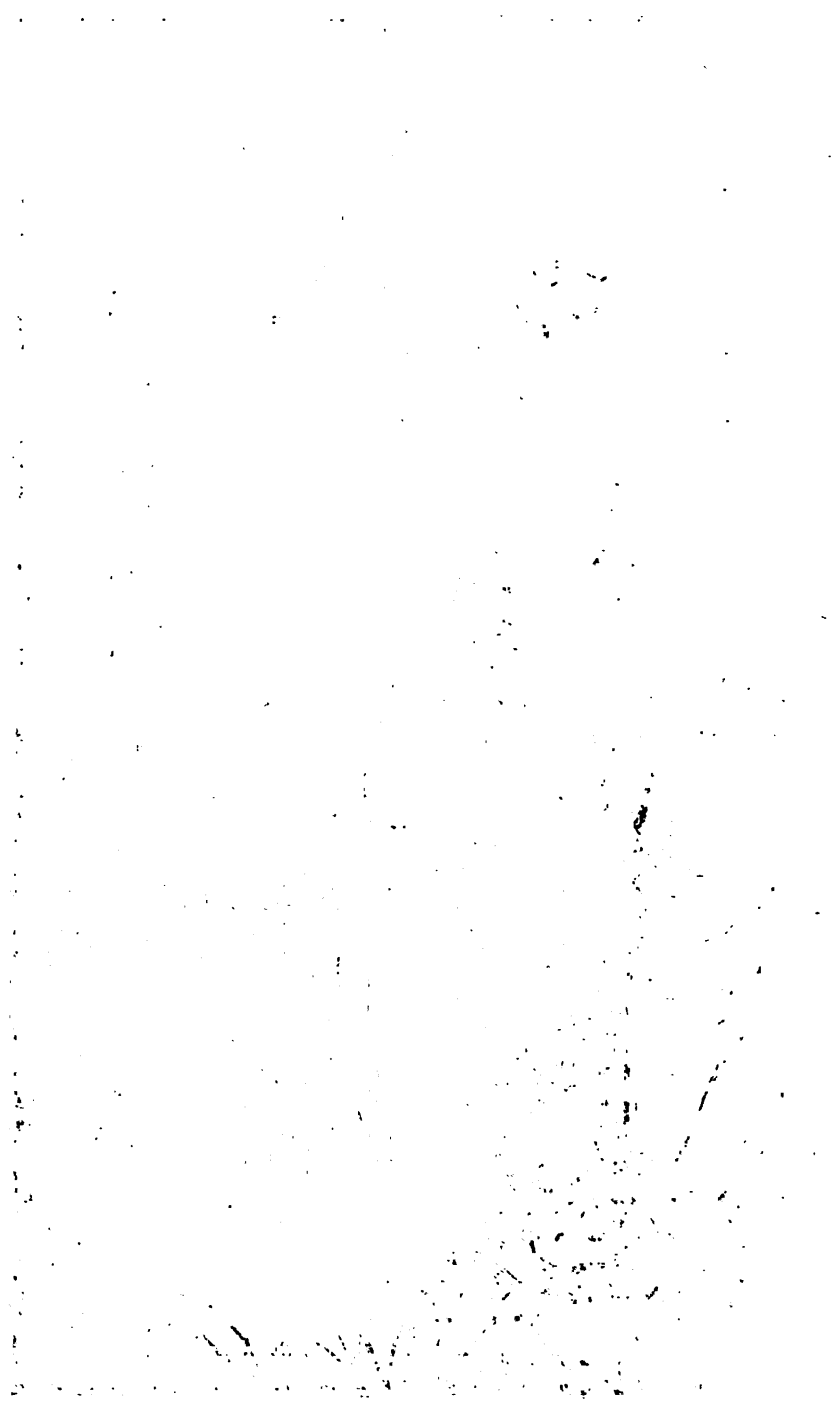
† *A System of Political Economy*. By John Lancelot Shadwell. (Trübner.)





TOO SUSCEPTIBLE.

See A STORY OF A GARDEN PARTY.



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LONDON SOCIETY.

JUNE 1877.

A STORY OF A GARDEN PARTY.

‘Bingo the Earl, Chivalry’s pearl,
Went a-philandering after a girl.’ *Ancient Ballad.*

THE possession of such a name as Bingo gives me, I think, some claim upon the commiseration of the public. Bingo is not a name which inspires respect. It does not tell of a long line of ancestors, some of whom took part in the Norman Conquest and the Crusades; nor does it call up before the reader’s eye a vision of a man of knightly bearing,—rather may it be said, if it suggests anything, to remind people of a small and insignificant dog, and you may be sure that was made the most of during my school-days. When I say that as a boy I have been led about at the end of a string, with a piece of blue ribbon at my neck, and been addressed as ‘good doggie,’ you will see that I have suffered much from my unfortunate patronymic.

Nor has it been made any better by my sponsorial appellation. It pleased my godfathers and god-mother, or more probably my parents, to call me Randolph. That is a name which was appropriate enough for a Border chieftain, a ‘Warden of the Marches’ who had the run of Branksome Hall, if there was anything left to eat after the retainers had dined;

for some gallant mosstrooper, who, after a life of daring, died on the congenial gibbet at ‘merry Carlisle;’ but it was no name for me. It was bad enough to be called Bingo; it was positively revolting to be called Randolph Bingo. I had serious thoughts of changing my name at one time, but gave it up on a friend’s remarking that it would be a Norfolk-Howardly thing to do; but I never signed my name in full—it was always R. Bingo; and you might make what you liked out of the ‘R.’—it might stand for the harmless Robert, or even for Rhadamanthus—I never confessed to anything but the plain initial.

Existence, however, was not entirely clouded by my absurd name. I had compensations. I was not bad-looking, as young men go nowadays, when there are a good many living proofs of Darwin’s theories to be seen in any place of public resort; and I had a good income—rather over than under that received by the President of the Board of Trade in his official capacity. That I inherited from my father, who had been something—I never knew exactly what—in the West Indies, and I

had nothing to do for it. I was, in fact, a young man about town, and, having no occupation, I naturally took up a hobby.

You will never guess what it was. I look upon chinamanias as a delusion. I am not particularly fond of pictures. I hate insects, and I don't care about flowers. I am not averse to seeing other people make fools of themselves in private theatricals, but I would scorn to make an exhibition of myself. I have no æsthetic tastes, nor any leaning to science, and I think politics are an unutterable bore. But I have one mania, or rather I should say one peculiarity, and that is what may be medically described as chronic devotion to the fair sex. I am always in love. I am perpetually getting engaged, and as I never dream of being off with the old love before I am on with the new, things get a little mixed sometimes. People talk about love at first sight; that is a slow and hesitating passion to that which animates me. The mere mention of a girl's name is enough; I can fall in love with that, with a shadow on a blind, a specimen of handwriting, a flower, a photograph—with anything, in fact, that can call up the vision, however remote, of feminine loveliness. I can adore on provocation so slight that it would have no effect at all on other people. I fell in love once, for instance, because a young creature wore her hat low over her eyes, and looked *up* at me so bewitchingly from under it. Another ensnayer used to climb a ladder in the paternal garden, and look *down* upon me from the fifth rung in such a way that I proposed on the spot. I fell in love with a soprano voice, and wrote it (the voice) warm letters, till I found out that it patronised 'buses and tram-cars, and

flung the aspirate about with positively lavish profusion.

Of course this extreme susceptibility led me into an enormous number of scrapes. I don't think I broke many hearts—none of the little affairs lasted long enough for that—but I caused much consternation, and upset the equanimity of quiet families who had too confidently received me as Jessie's or Ada's lover, as the case might be, and found out how soon I transferred my allegiance to another shrine.

When this artless narrative commences, I had just scrambled out of my twenty-third engagement. The word 'scrambled' does not imply dignity, and it was in a by-no-means-dignified manner that I had evaded my responsibilities on the occasion. The object of my affections had professed herself deeply injured by the withdrawal of my proposal—it had really been hardly one at all—just a whisper about an hour long in the conservatory, and she snapped me up like an alligator; and her brother had come and flourished a stick about, and been very hasty and absurd. He soon cooled down, however, while the young lady accepted a modest *solatium*, and married a curate two months afterwards.

Thus at the time of which I am speaking I was in what I may call a comparatively disengaged condition. My mind was open, as it were, for any new impressions—though, by the way, a letter from an old flame, a cousin Annie, had made me feel very spoony on her again; and I had a decided *penchant* for a young lady with divine hair I had been introduced to at a morning concert a day or two before. But still I was as open to further feminine influences as it was ever possible for me to be, and accordingly I accepted an in-

vation to go down to Sunnyford Hall with infinite alacrity.

Sunnyford deserved its name. It was the breeziest brightest little village imaginable, and the Hall was worthy of it—a delightful old Elizabethan house, always full of pleasant company, which invariably included a number of the most fascinating girls to be found in the whole country-side.

I went down, therefore, with the liveliest anticipations of what the Americans call a 'good time;' but had I known what was to befall me, I would as soon have packed my portmanteau for Pandemonium as for Sunnyford. I must not anticipate, however, as they say in novels; let me state, then, that I arrived at Sunnyford Hall, and there I found what the local newspaper describing our archery-meeting called a 'perfect galaxy of beauty' assembled. I am not exaggerating when I say that I would willingly have led to the altar any one unmarried girl in the house who would have had me; and the difficulty of singling out one special object of devotion was really immense. At last I settled upon a most piquant little lady who rejoiced in the name of Georgina Barstow, who also seemed to have a real genius for flirtation, and to her I devoted myself as assiduously as a newly-elected member for a Radical constituency given to deputations devotes himself to the House. I am betraying no confidence when I say that Miss Barstow, like the immortal Barkis, was exceedingly 'willing.' Other swains hovered round her, for, like Mr. Locker's heroine, she was

'An angel in a frock,
With a fascinating cock
To her nose;'

but Georgie seemed to prefer your humble servant.

I proposed to her at a garden

party. We had been driven in by the rain, and were having afternoon tea in the house, and I was standing with Georgie at one of the French windows opening on to the lawn, when I made the plunge. She balanced her teacup thoughtfully for a moment, and then, to carry out the aquatic metaphor, she jumped in with me. For the twenty-fourth time in my life I was an engaged man, and upon my word I breathed more freely after it. I was so used to it, you see, that I felt quite uncomfortable without a young woman attached, as it were, to my fortunes.

Georgie and I had one brief bright hour of bliss—that is to say, of engaged bliss. We had experienced unengaged bliss to any extent previously, but we only had an hour after the fatal words were spoken; for an old aunt with whom she was staying carried her off at the end of that time, and left me disconsolate. However, I had no time to mope, as we were due at a ball that night some dozen miles off; and though I knew I should not meet Georgie there, I felt in excellent trim for the festivities. Who knows, I thought, but that I may meet some congenial spirit who will cheer the forlorn lover during his lady's absence! And egad the forlorn lover was cheered with a vengeance, as you shall see.

I went to the ball. The rule laid down by that excellent and easy-going poet Mr. Thomas Moore concerning the lips that are near when we are far from those we love, has been mine through life. On this occasion, the lips that were near were those of a young thing whose dancing was of the most sylph-like character, and whose conversation was so beautifully besprinkled with scraps of poetry that I had hard work to

keep myself up to her level. The Barstow was blonde, *petite*, and prosaic; my new friend was a brunette, rather over the average size, poetic and romantic—a complete contrast, in fact, in every way. Under such influences I become poetic and romantic myself; and as I engaged Miss Leland—for that was her name—for dance after dance, I need not tell you how my susceptible heart comported itself, and how, after two quadrilles, two waltzes, and a galop, I was hopelessly in love.

It happened in the conservatory. I have always been peculiarly susceptible to the influence of conservatories, and the moment we sat down among the camellias I knew what would happen. Miss Leland had been quoting *Hypérion*; and what could I do but, like Paul Fleming, tell her that the student Hieronymus was lying at her feet? I did not *quite* mean to propose, you know, but she took me up directly; and instead of playing the rôle of Mary Ashburton, she reclined her head gently on my shoulder (I ought to have said my arm was round her waist); and for the twenty-fifth time I was an engaged man. Of course I never remembered Georgie Barstow; but my thoughts went back to her with a sudden shock when I discovered that Miss Leland's name was also Georgina, and that she too expected to be called 'Georgie.' It then occurred to me also, for the first time, that I had carefully engaged myself to two ladies at once, and that the consequences might be a little awkward.

I went back to town next day with what I believe it is *de rigueur* to call 'mingled feelings;' and mine were certainly a good deal more mingled than was pleasant. Here were two charming girls both willing to be Mrs. Bingo,—I don't

mean together, but separately,—and I really didn't know which to choose. Never surely was mortal man impaled on the horns of a livelier dilemma; and the more I looked at it the less I liked it.

The plot thickened next morning when the post brought me two letters. They had both written, bless their hearts; and in two different handwritings a little flutterer remained, at the end of a charming epistle, my 'affectionate Georgie.' At any rate, these letters must be answered while I made up my mind on the matter. So in a spirit of fairness, which I think deserves commendation, I despatched the same neat little letter to both, only altering the superscription. One Georgie should not crow over the other, if they ever compared notes, if I could prevent it.

In the mean time, I never felt more perplexed in my life. Frequently as I had been engaged before, there had been only one lady in each case, and now I had two on hand at once. A too susceptible heart was certainly a very dangerous organ. Nor could I consult any one. I mentioned my difficulty to one friend, hoping he would be touched by my position and give me some good advice, but he received the news with demoniac laughter, and persisted in calling me 'Bingo the Bigamist,' which he declared would make a capital title for a play.

The more I thought the matter over the more awkward it seemed; and in the mean time, of course, both engagements went on. Each of the dear creatures wrote every day, and I was kept at work answering them. The same letter would not do after the first, and I was always afraid of mixing up the letters and referring to the

tender inquiries of Miss Barstow in an answer addressed to Miss Leland. The prosaic Georgie Number One clashed with the poetic Georgie Number Two in my mind in the most confusing manner, and it was all I could do to keep them distinct. I received two engagement rings, and duly returned two, both of precisely the same pattern; and lockets also, the jeweller grinning in a most aggravating manner when I ordered them. Both the Georgies sent photographs also; and altogether I was driven nearly wild.

At last there came a crisis. I received letters from their respective mothers. Number One hadn't a father, and Number Two's male parent didn't appear to trouble his head much about the matter; and they informed me they were both coming to town on the same day, arriving at the same station. I was in despair; the only comfort was, they were not coming by the same train. Miss B. was to arrive in the morning, and Miss L. in the afternoon. There was nothing for it but to pluck up courage and meet them both; and I did so. I met Georgie Barstow, and was received rapturously. I lunched with her and her mother at their hotel; and I tore myself away from her on the plea of a pressing engagement,—true enough, forsooth,—and flew to meet Georgie Leland and dine with her and Mrs. L. at *their* hotel.

Then began a state of things which is but feebly described as appalling. I had to dance attendance upon each lady every day; and after blissful moments—or rather moments which should have been blissful, but weren't—to invent excuses and fly off for ditto with the other. I was in perpetual fear, of course, of meeting Number One, after inventing a series of engagements, when escort-

ing Number Two. London is large enough, no doubt; but there is no place in the world in which you so often meet the very people you wish to avoid. They were both charming girls singly, and I could have been devoted to one of them; but together they were too much for me. I felt my mind giving way under the strain of a double devotion, and my hair growing gray from the tax this dual existence made upon my energies. It was really something frightful. They had neither of them seen many of the sights of London, and I had to do all the show places *twice*. Judge if any human being could stand that! And when I add that I visited Madame Tussaud's admirable exhibition in Baker-street twice in one day, with one Georgie in the morning and the other in the afternoon, with a short interval for lunch, and that the door-keeper evidently recognised me, and must have thought I had a relation in the Chamber of Horrors,—you will admit that even the two victims of my susceptibility would have pitied me had they known my position.

I rose each morning with a feeling that the climax might come on that particular day, and I went to rest at night like a man who had been sentenced to death and then reprieved. No wonder I grew worn and gray, and showed my anxieties in my face. Both my Georgies remarked it, bless their sympathetic little hearts, little knowing that they were the burden which was wearing me to a shadow. One morning I rose with a peculiarly ominous feeling in my mind; and it was not relieved when I heard from Miss Leland in the morning that I should be expected to escort her with some friends to the Opera that night. I agreed, however;

and in the afternoon I sped off to take Miss Barstow to a morning concert. She was engaged for the evening—I did not ask how; and after seeing her home I rushed to the club and dined, and then went to the Opera. I shall never forget that awful evening. It was the *début* of Zaré Thalberg. She came out, as you remember, in *Don Giovanni*, and all eyes were centred on the Zerlina of the night. I had neither eyes nor thoughts for singer or music, for the moment I took my place in a box on the O.P. side, in dutiful attendance on Miss Leland, I became conscious that in the box exactly opposite to us there was Miss Barstow and her mother; and though they would possibly resent the imputation, they glared at me.

Then Georgie Barstow, with cruel kindness, bowed to me with *emmesement*.

'Dear me,' said Miss Leland, 'who is your friend, Randolph?'

Now I was prepared for such a position as this, and had the answer ready; so I replied blandly and coolly, 'O, my second cousin.' Not 'cousin,' you will observe; 'second cousin,' which is more remote and more circumstantial. No one could doubt a statement about such a relative, or be jealous of her. So I thought, at least; but Miss Leland said, with considerable *hauteur*,

'Indeed! She seems much surprised to see you. Hadn't you better go and speak to your *second cousin*? I am longing to be introduced.'

'Jealousy,' I said to myself; and then I said, as quietly as I could, 'Well, perhaps I had better go round for a moment,' and hastened off to Number One.

I found Georgie Barstow in a similar frame of mind—that is, in a state of aggravated jealousy.

She scorned to ask me any questions; but her mother begged to know who my friends on the other side of the house were in a tone which would have frozen the Victoria Nyanza. Having found a second cousin rather a failure, I said mildly that it was my cousin's wife, whereat the old woman looked suspicious and Georgie sniffed. I was evidently in hot water here also, and was just going to make my escape, when Mrs. Barstow said,

'Perhaps you will introduce us after the opera is over, Mr. Bingo. We have seen so few of your friends.'

I could only bow and rush out and cool my burning head in the lobby, and try and collect my thoughts.

I dare not go back to either box, for I felt certain some one would come in, and I might be betrayed, as the lady with Miss Leland knew a good many people in town; and I was, besides, in so excited a state I might commit myself. My head was whirling, and I hardly knew where I was. At last, in desperation, I tore a couple of leaves out of my pocket-book and wrote two notes. They were both alike, with the necessary alteration, and ran as follows:

'Dearest Georgie,—Very sorry. A telegram has called me away, so I must put off introducing you to my { second cousin }
{ cousin's wife }. See you to-morrow.—Your own devoted
'RANDOLPH.'

And I sent a man with them to each box.

That was all very well; but, after twisting up the notes, in my hurry and excitement I misdirected them, and Georgie Barstow received with astonishment my excuse about my 'second cousin,' while Georgie Leland heard

with equal astonishment of my 'cousin's wife.' Furthermore, they would see each other reading the notes, would divine at once that they had gone wrong, and, as a natural consequence, that I had two 'dearest Georgies,' and was the 'own devoted Randolph' of my second cousin and my cousin's wife. I say they would see all this, for I fled from the house and rushed home like a madman. What took place afterwards at the theatre, I don't know; but I do know what happened next morning, and I am not likely to forget it while memory holds a seat in this bewildered brain.

In the first place, I received a letter early in the morning, delivered by hand, which contained the following:

'Sir,—We have met, and know all

GEORGINA BARSTOW.

GEORGINA LELAND.

'R. Bingo, Esq.'

Prepared as I was, I was stunned when another letter came to revive me, which informed me that Mrs. B. and Mrs. L. would call on me that morning, and also that they had instructed their respective solicitors to commence immediate actions against me for breach of promise of marriage. That was pleasant; but there was a more trying surprise than all to come next.

I had just finished my breakfast, and was vaguely wondering how I should face the situation, when the door opened, and my servant—the rascal was grinning, and had evidently been bribed—ushered in the two Georgies!

You have heard of people wishing the earth to swallow them; but if the Mælestrom had yawned before me then I should have taken a header into it.

I started up and gasped; I could do nothing else.

Gazing at me sternly and in complete silence, they put down on the table together the rings, lockets, photographs, and other presents I had given them. Even in my agony I could have laughed to see how each little pile contained exactly the same articles, and my letters, including the two fatal notes I had sent the previous night. Then they slowly retired, all this time without saying a word, while I of course was speechless; but just as they were going out of the door Georgie Barstow—she was always an impulsive little thing, bless her heart!—found her feelings too much for her, and ejaculated the simple but all-sufficing word 'Wretch!' And then I was alone again.

I did not wait for the mothers or the solicitors. I fled. Before leaving the country, however, I wrote to the parents of the outraged damsels, saying that, as I was honestly willing to marry both of them did the laws of my country permit it, I would marry either of them if they chose to submit their claims to the arbitrament of the customary coin, or, in other words, toss up for me. Nothing, I'm sure, could be fairer; but I received no reply, and to save them the trouble of proceeding against me I left the country.

I remained in foreign lands two years. I will not say where, though Sir George Nares could tell, as he listed, how the name of Bingo was not unknown even on the verge of the Palæocrystic sea; and I did not return till my victims were happily married. But the story got wind, and my duplex matrimonial intentions afforded a theme for the scoffer; so that though I am innocent of the crime, I am known from China to Peru as 'Bingo the Bigamist.'

H. SAVILE CLARKE.

PROUD MAISIE.

CHAPTER XVII.

ALBERT GREY.

I TAKE it that intellect stands first among the most facile charms a man can exercise over women, much as beauty is a woman's prime and most universal attraction for men. Yet there is nothing in such a conclusion for any young lover, modestly aware that his head-piece is not the strongest part about him, to distress himself about. Here, as elsewhere, Nature manages to preserve a sort of rough equality in her arrangements. Does not a special providence decree the ugliness of heiresses? And there is another unwritten law, which has laid down that the highest training, the extreme sharpening of masculine wits and untiring activity of the masculine brain, shall tend to do away in their possessor with those other engaging qualities which—call them trifling, superficial though we may—go so far towards the winning of fair women—manly composure, courteous deference, consideration, grace of presence and manner—all of which, to say the truth, it requires a certain amount of mental leisure not to lose.

Thus the scales are adjusted, and a blessed thing it is. For the quick-witted, practised, ready expert of many talents, who has escaped the drawbacks of his advantages; who in society is not affected, nor absent and preoccupied; who is neither a bore, nor a fidget, nor a slattern, nor a cynic; who can hold his tongue, and yet not lapse into supercilious or self-absorbed silence; who has not let his theoretical devotion to humanity generally betray him into a

petty egotism most trying to his fellow-creatures individually,—he is one, 'if ever such wight were,' to make sad and indiscriminate havoc among female hearts.

To the large colony of English resident in Ludwigsheim that winter was a memorable one, simply through the addition to their circle of Mr. Albert Grey. Alighting in the place quite suddenly, he had found his level at once, and found it on a pedestal. He had brought introductions to a leading family or two, and before long he knew everything about everybody, and everybody everything about him. He was a man of mark to begin with. A very little literary fame goes far in any coterie, and Mr. Grey, besides being correspondent to a leading London newspaper, had just published a particularly readable book, the *Romance of Ancient Architecture*, which was making a genuine hit, and soon found its way to everybody's drawing-room table. He was now writing another, which was not to be sketchy and popular, but profound and in several volumes, and for which he was here to consult the Ludwigsheim library.

So much for his work. For his play he had begun to give courses of lectures on fine art, and by way of illustrations to these he got up excursions to the art-galleries, museums, and other curiosities in which the town abounded.

The English alone settled in Ludwigsheim were numerous enough for such a scheme to answer, without counting the Germans, or the birds of passage who made the town their halting-place

on their way to Italy. But in a little speculation where other men could at most have hoped not to fail Albert Grey created a kind of furore. Nor was it without reason. It was not through display of miscellaneous knowledge. The wisdom of Solomon and a penny cyclopædia bound in one would never alone have won him such influence. Of how many students that we see is one inclined to exclaim, 'He heapeth up riches' (of learning), 'but knoweth not who shall gather them.' What becomes of this hoard of information these intellectual misers are always adding to? They seem unable both to benefit others and to profit by it themselves.

Now it was the rarest and not the least among Mr. Grey's mental gifts that he was master, so to speak, of his raw material—knew how to sift, knead, mould, bake, and to impart to those who required it at his hand. The result was that his lecture-room became in as great vogue as a popular theatre. The ladies of Ludwigsheim wept over their neglected education and determined to redeem the time. Even the sober old men discovered that he had always something to tell worth knowing, and that they never had known.

For artists these 'evenings' were particularly valuable, and I went there with Eva, to please her at first, but soon to please myself. What was I that I should be superior to the luxury of having my brain tickled? The lectures acted upon me like an ingenious play. Just as long as they lasted, the subject, the persons and incidents the lecturer brought before us so graphically, had a vital interest for me—my head could busy itself over the ancient Romans or the Renaissance painters, my heart warm over their trials, struggles, and

achievements. True, by the next morning all my fervour had faded away; but even such passing allurements were too pleasant to be despised, nor perhaps were they without their effect in the long-run.

It was about a fortnight after our first meeting with him that the following note reached us from Mrs. Meredith:

'My dear little Miss Maisie,—I take it for very unkind that you and Miss Eva have never been once to see me since our return last week. Do come, without loss of time—to-day if you can, to-morrow at the latest. Francis Joseph longs to make your acquaintance. And will you and Miss Eva dine with us on Saturday?

'Ever your devoted

'SOPHIE.

'P.S. We are expecting one English gentleman that evening, whom I shall so much like to introduce to you—Mr. Albert Grey—the most cleverest man you have ever met.'

Over this postscript we laughed a good deal. Had Sophie too been awakened to a sense of ignorance hitherto unrepented of? A little intellectual craze would no doubt be a nice and innocent pastime for whiling away the long dull winter. As a lady's craze it needed of course a cavalier to lead off the dance, and here was Mr. Grey, who asked nothing better for his leisure hours.

We went to Sophie's that afternoon, and found him there. She was much surprised and rather disappointed to find that no introduction was wanted, but, this being so, seemed well satisfied to see us on easy pleasant terms with her new friend. As soon as he had left she began to speak his praises, and Sophie knew no half-measures in her admiration. Every lecture, every excursion of his she meant to attend. From a

social point of view he would prove the most valuable acquisition in the world, she felt sure, and she was bent on improving his acquaintance. Even Leopold, who was present, and in a pretty good humour, admitted that he liked the fellow. Grey gave himself 'no cursed airs.' Wide apart though the two men were in most respects, it needed but to watch them together to perceive that there existed a tacit kind of freemasonry between them—the involuntary mutual understanding between gentlemen who have seen more, perhaps, of the wrong side of the world than of the right. With Leopold Meredith Grey found that he had several acquaintances in common. With whom had he not? To Leopold Meredith Grey could make himself the best of all good company. To whom could he not? Then he would sit up for hours with Leopold in the smoking-room, and had withal a collection of pipes far superior to Mr. Meredith's own, and which would alone have entitled him to Sophie's husband's respect. Thus he dropped naturally and quickly into the place of an *habitué* at their house, where we met him constantly in the evenings—evenings which I began to perceive were insensibly becoming the feature of the season.

One night in particular I recollect, when he had contrived to keep the dinner-table, if not in a roar, at least in a perpetual ripple of laughter from first to last. We three ladies then left the two gentlemen *tête-à-tête* to tell stories, strange and excellent no doubt, but which we, as ladies, were compelled to forego.

Sophie took us first to the nursery to look at the sleeping Francis Joseph.

She simply idolised him, in a motherly, sensible sort of way,

but it had often struck me that Leopold was not very fond of the child. Luckily Sophie was not sensitive on this point. 'All Englishmen hate babies,' she observed, 'and Leopold *will* not see that this little love is his living image. It has its father's temper too. Ask nurse. Never has she seen a child of three—four—months with so strong a will.'

Wethen returned to the cheerful drawing-room, all Dresden china and looking-glasses, and gathered round the open stove. Snow was falling outside. From the adjoining apartment there came every minute the pleasing echoes of renewed laughter. But shut out though we were from this after-dinner merriment, we indemnified ourselves by freely discussing the gentlemen over the fire.

'Leopold has never been so little bored,' said Sophie, laughing to herself at the sound of his voice. 'I thought sure he would find German life dull, after English.'

'Do you ever think of going to live in England?' I hazarded suddenly.

'One day it may happen, I daresay,' replied Sophie, 'but no hurry. Leopold's brother, Lord Meredith, you know, has behaved shameful to him—shameful! Now Lord and Lady Meredith would be glad to be friends with him again. But my Leopold has something to say to that. In time he may perhaps relent; but we wish them both to regret the way in which they treated him years before.'

By his marriage with the heiress, Leopold, it seemed, had effectually redeemed his character in the sight of his relations.

'When do you think you shall go?' I asked, troubled by odd floating visions of an intrusive past mixing itself forcibly with the present.

'O, next summer, or the next. I don't know. Leopold means to stay here for the season. He is fond of sleighing, and in the evening he goes to sleep or has Mr. Grey, who will dine with us as often as we like. What a man is that!' and she sighed admiringly; 'he knows the world like his hand.'

'Men's privilege,' sighed Eva sententiously.

'And one that we need not, sure, want for ourselves,' rebuked Sophie, wisely shaking her head. 'But I wish you would tell me, *mignonne*—you, who knew this Mr. Grey long, long ago,—for Mrs. Meredith was nothing if not inquisitive, and Eva's secret had transpired one afternoon over that fatal coffee,—'what think you of him now as compared with then?'

'I think I should like him better now,' said Eva oracularly, 'if I had not known him then.'

'What! was he so much more charming then, *mignonne*?' she asked, with curiosity.

'He was so much younger a man,' said Eva.

'Fie! Grey is not old. To look at him you would not give him thirty year. He has thirty-five, though. He told Leopold himself.'

'He was always charming,' sighed Eva, 'but in a more frank and natural way.'

'Ah, but now he is a famous man—or on the road to be. You cannot expect the spirits of a boy. You know he will soon have finished his great work, and then we shall all hear speak of him. I would the king might give him some post here. He talks German perfect, and likes Ludwigsheim. There is only one thing that he does want.'

'And that is?'

'A wife. O, you may laugh; but such men do. It would be a true kindness to find him one.'

We laughed the more at her grave and matter-of-fact-like tone.

'Not so easy,' I suggested.

'Nor so difficult, dear,' said Sophie, nodding her head with matronly superiority. 'Between you and me, Mr. Grey is a man—what the French call *revenu des femmes*. These are always the easiest to fix. Now all Ludwigsheim, except you two, has gone mad after him. But, between you and me again, my desire is to marry him to my cousin Charlotte.'

This revelation checked further irreverent mirth on my part. I was even struck with a certain admiration for the cool practical manner in which she acted up to her views of life.

Of cousin Charlotte we knew little, but believed there was nothing particular to know, beyond the fact that she was the eldest child of a *mésalliance* between an aunt of Sophie's and a wealthy but middle-class merchant, which stood in the way of her marrying into the upper ten.

'And I always said,' continued Sophie, 'that if I married her to one who was not noble he should be an Englishman. Lolotte is just the wife Mr. Albert Grey is wanting, and has the little fortune he would like besides.'

'A capital match,' said I gravely.

'You see,' she resumed, laughing, 'it is so nice that I can talk of it all, openly, to you and Miss Eva. You will not be jealous of Lolotte. For you, Eva, say downright you care no more for him; and as for you, Maisie *mignonne*—'

'Well?' said I, wondering to what her shrewdness was tending.

'You would first ask that such a man should fall in love with you before you even look at him twice. Now Mr. Grey will never lose his heart again to anybody. He told me so, and why.'

At this crisis the two gentle-

men chose to come in, and cut short the dialogue just when it promised to become interesting.

When we left that night the snow had ceased; but the streets were so slippery that it was considered safer for us to walk the little distance to the Carolinenstrasse, under Mr. Grey's escort. As we went, he surprised us by an inadvertent heartfelt exclamation that, of all the insupportable bores he had ever had to entertain, Mr. Meredith was the heaviest in hand.

'Then why do you come so often to do penance?' asked Eva innocently.

The same question had been on the tip of my tongue, but something checked me.

'I suppose every one who does penance does it for much the same reason,' replied Mr. Grey quickly, speaking to Eva, but looking my way—'for the sake of some reward that's not to be had otherwise.'

'What did he mean?' asked Eva, when we had parted from him at the gate.

'How should I know?'

'I thought you might. What was he saying to you so earnestly to-night when Mrs. Meredith ran up and fetched you away to look at the photographs of her family?'

I laughed. She was jesting, of course, and so was he. It was all a jest; and in it, as a jest only, I meant to join.

An episode in a life sometimes narrowly misses growing, so to speak, into the plot of it. A seafarer cut off from old moorings, and with no new haven in view, adrift on dull waters for a little space, sights some shore. He will stop just to see it, he thinks; then after a day or two pass on and forget it, of course. So slight an interlude can leave no perceptible trace. But the island he has reached is firm and the sea is dreary. His

attention is occupied by the spot and its novel features, and he forgets that the world is wide. He lingers to explore every nook. Gradually these new impressions assume more influence, and estranged as he is from his own self, and severed from the past, the exile flatters himself at last that he can extemporise a new home. Many may do so and not repent. Only beware nostalgia, the irrecoverable *mal du pays* of some hearts, trying to live again in another medium from that in which they first took root.

In due time Lolotte arrived at Sophie's to stay. She was really charmingly pretty, very like a china doll, opening and shutting her blue eyes in something of the same unvarying way, angelically mild and amiable in disposition. She was one to be loved at first sight, but held out no promise of hidden perfections.

About a fortnight later, Sophie confided to us, one morning at the studio, that all was going on just as she wished, and that already Mr. Grey's attentions were becoming very marked.

'To whom?' said Eva, who could not dissemble, and whom Mrs. Meredith's self-assumed arbitration in the matter of Mr. Grey's future seemed particularly to provoke. 'It was to Maisie, and not to your cousin, that he chose to talk the whole of yesterday evening.'

'Of course, of course. But how blind you are! That was to excite the jealousy of the other. Lolotte is rather sleepy, you know,' then turning to me, 'You thought it was for that only, did not you, *mignonne*?'

'I never thought about it,' said I. 'Mr. Grey and I were quarrelling so fiercely the whole time, because I would not admire his favourite pre-Peruginesque Italian painters enough.'

'There,' said Sophie triumphantly, 'what he likes is a child like poor Lolotte, who will never differ from him on any subject whatever.'

'But I suspect,' said Eva obstinately, when Mrs. Meredith was gone, 'that Mr. Grey would rather spend his life in quarrelling with you than in agreeing with Lolotte, or any one else indeed.'

I disclaimed vehemently and quite sincerely, believing I knew better. For however sharp and penetrating we will be, we shall never be safe against occasional stone-blindness to what lies directly under our nose.

Mr. Grey was really attentive to Charlotte, when he had time, and happened not to forget. Mrs. Meredith began to look upon it almost as a settled affair. But the crisis had not come; and the next thing was to go casting about in her mind how to bring it about. There came a week when Leopold happened to be away, and she pounced upon the opportunity to give a children's party at her house. It was in Francis Joseph's honour nominally, of course, but got up really for the sake of Lolotte, who was to preside over the younger visitors; a part in which she would appear to the greatest advantage. Mr. Grey had promised to come; he was fond of children, and would help Lolotte to amuse the little ones. Then Sophie had her plan for accidentally leaving the two young people alone for a few minutes, confident that Mr. Grey would not fail to seize upon this occasion for declaring himself.

All promised fair, when the day before the party Lolotte caught so bad a cold that she was unable to leave her room on the morrow. Sophie was out of patience at the unlucky *contre-temps*—far more concerned than the heroine herself, who submitted

meekly enough to the inevitable, and would cheerfully have made her appearance with a swelled face tied up, had not Sophie sternly forbidden such a measure.

The party without her went right merrily, thanks chiefly to Mr. Grey. He was in the highest spirits, and for the whole afternoon romped with the children with more than a child's zest. His tricks, his games, his pranks, his devices won all their hearts. Caught by the spirit of the thing, I seconded him vehemently. We improvised scenes, dances, masquerades, charades, and all manner of entertainments. Never, for a moment, was Mr. Grey at a loss. The children were half mad with delight. The little revel was at its height when the dining-room door was flung open, showing the table whereon the young people's feast was spread, and Sophie presiding at the top, where Lolotte, alas, should have sat.

He made the children troop in, two and two, himself taking my arm and bringing up the rear. But when the last small couple had trotted through the door, instead of following, he closed it, shutting us off into the drawing-room.

'Just one moment, by your leave,' he said, laughing, and leading me to the sofa, 'for the master of the ceremonies to get his breath.'

I sank down, laughing too, and no less exhausted, by racing about at hide-and-seek and blind-man's buff.

'Miss Noel,' said he, 'I haven't worked so hard for years. *Old*, the romp has been too much for somebody's hair.'

Putting up my hands, I found, to my dismay, that it was streaming in admired disorder over my shoulders.

'Stay as you are; don't touch it,' said he, taking hold of both my hands to prevent me. 'You would

make such a fine picture just now. You look so like, so like—'

'A Fury,' I suggested.

'A *Mænad* or *Bacchante*—no, not that either; you have no red in your hair. Shall we say the *Lesbian* just before she took the leap? No, that's not it.'

And there in that attitude he kept me till he despaired of finding a simile to his taste. Then my hands were released, and I began slowly to twist up my locks into their accustomed ball behind.

'Have you quite done with me as your lay-figure?' I asked, rallying. 'Shall I do to hang a sonnet, or perhaps even a novelette, upon? Tell me, now, which of your compositions do you mean to put me into?'

'Hush! ah, no!' he said, shocked; 'you can surely not think so ill of me as to suppose—'

'Indeed, you have often told me that the most insignificant acquaintance never comes amiss to the student of human nature, as he goes gleaning about for stuff for his literary work.'

'Now, don't,' he said beseechingly; 'after all, one is a human being before one is a student; and there are acquaintances who teach one new things about oneself.'

'Very true,' said I mournfully; 'you have taught me that I am a hopeless ignoramus on a thousand important subjects, about which I shall never venture to pronounce an opinion again.'

'And you,' he returned, facing me suddenly with a penetrating look, 'have helped me to unlearn—'

'Miss Noel! Mr. Grey!' cried the shrill voice of Mrs. Meredith from within, and cut him short. He uttered an exclamation, which I fancy I was not intended to hear. The next instant Sophie opened the door.

'Are you never going to join us? We are all waiting for you.'

'Coming, coming,' said Mr. Grey; adding, in a lower tone to me, as we rose, 'Shall I see you in the sculpture-gallery to-morrow?'

'O, yes,' I replied recklessly; 'I always go there with Eva on Wednesdays.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

UNDER THE MEDUSA.

THE next day Eva and I spent among the marbles in the museum, where she was making studies from the antique. I had betaken myself thither with the ambition of 'doing' the twelve halls into which the Ludwigsheim collection is divided. It was the twentieth time that I had started with these laudable intentions; and for the twentieth time I got no further than the room next to that in which Eva was at work, there coming to a standstill before a wonderful head of Medusa, whose fascination forbade me to fix my mind on the surrounding sculptures. Her look followed me about, saying, 'Why waste your attention on this and on that whilst you can look at me?'

At last I fell to attempting to sketch her, which at least afforded a sensible pretext for allowing her to monopolise my contemplations.

Presently I saw Mr. Albert Grey come round with a party of friends. He stopped for a moment to ask why I had selected the Medusa to try my hand upon.

'Because it haunts me,' I replied, without looking up, 'and I thought this night, perhaps, break the spell; just as, when you have a tune running in your head that you want to get rid of, you might try to whistle it away.'

He laughed and passed on. Half an hour afterwards, having parted with his companions, he came

sauntering back, and finding me in the same place stood still, looking over my shoulder, shaking his head at my depravity of taste, and taking pains to prove to me that my beautiful Medusa was the daughter of a period when art was on the decline. I resented this, and with more zeal than discretion, thus drawing down on myself a little lecture upon the three stages of Grecian sculpture.

I think he can never have met with so unruly and irreverent a pupil. But whether he chose to imagine that I was not so utterly destitute of sense and sensibility on the subject as I chose to appear, he persevered. The more obstinate and heretical my mood, the more persuasively entertaining he became. And though all the while I was thinking rudely, 'O these clever men, how well they talk! but much they care for their listener. Talking has become to them a gratification in itself; they enjoy it as a skater enjoys cutting figures on the ice;' yet the rare, easy, pleasant grace of manner which won him popularity everywhere—the net in which my Eva's girlish heart had once long ago been entangled—was not without its effect on me now.

By and by, suspecting that I was not listening to his sermonette, he made an end of it, and began instead to criticise my sketch, giving me a number of hints so sharp and to the point that I glanced up at him suddenly in astonishment. He stopped short in the middle of a sentence, as he met my wondering eyes.

'I can't understand in the least,' said I, 'how, after having once adopted painting as a profession, you should have given it up.'

'It did not satisfy me, nor I myself in it,' he replied.

'I suppose you were not easily satisfied in those days.'

'Nor am I now,' he returned; 'only, since I started in life, I have learnt the grand lesson the world teaches—to be content with half satisfaction.'

'Come,' said I, 'wherever you started from, you ought to be satisfied surely with your position and prospects in the race now.'

'Perhaps,' said he; 'but mine has been such an odd career, Miss Noel. Suppose, whilst you go on with your drawing, I were to tell you a story which will answer the question of how I chanced ever to take up art, ever to leave it, and to become exactly what you see me to-day.'

'Do,' said I, feeling supremely interested for the moment, as usual, whatever the subject he was holding forth about. What sort of an autobiographical sketch would his be? I had often wondered, and wished to know.

The gallery was almost deserted. Eva was out of earshot in the next hall. The old warder, waddling up and down, eyed us approvingly as he passed. He probably thought I was taking a drawing-lesson as I sat there on a camp-stool with block and pencils, Medusa looking down on me from one side, Albert Grey on the other.

'My parents were very rich and very indulgent people,' he began, 'who brought me up in clover, under the impression that ringing the bell was the immediate cause of dinner, and that every man's natural inheritance included not only a fair share of the earth, but a house, furniture, servants, money to pay for whatever he wanted, and that he was never likely to want anything that money couldn't buy.'

'I was to be the clever boy of my family, and did begin by carrying off the honours at school. I found this easy, and unluckily became restless to distinguish myself in other ways, and finding

this easier still, succeeded so well as to cut short my Eton career! But I needn't trouble you with my school and college scrapes. I was not quite so reckless as I seemed. I knew that I had within me the ability to retrieve all the time and chances I was throwing away, whenever I chose. And Fortune has always encouraged me to believe in my lucky star. I was still quite a young fellow when the father of one of my college friends—Lord X. let us call him—took an immense fancy to me, and I became his private secretary.'

'Indeed!' said I, surprised. 'Why, then, here's another rôle you have tried, and thrown up.'

'Ah, you mean I might have meddled in diplomacy—yes—entered Parliament, risen who can say how high on the ladder. For I had inclination then, interest too—there was everything in my favour, but—' he hesitated.

'But?'

'Lord X. had a daughter,' and he stopped again, with a half laugh, adding frankly, 'You are wondering what possesses me to retail all this to you. If I go on, I know you will put me down either as a fatuitous fool, or a villain making his apology.'

'Go on,' said I, laughing, 'and when you've done I'll tell you which of the two I think you.'

'Lady Constance—Conny they called her—was exceedingly pretty, but that was nothing; full of life and spirits, but that was nothing—she was a little witch, irresistible, irresistible at last. I know she began, unlike the rest of her family, by treating me as a dependent, an inferior, ignoring me as she would a servant or a shop-boy, as though, for her, I were not a man with free will, but a thing set there to do her pleasure. This behaviour half amused, half nettled me. I thought her a child.

But I wanted a mild revenge. I began to make a show of the deepest admiration for her. This had the effect of softening her manner surprisingly; and it dawned upon me that it was my apparent indifference before which had set her against me. You see, she was in fact anything but a child. Very soon there was no pretence about my devotion, and she abandoned her heart entirely to a romantic infatuation,' he said modestly, 'for a man whom she knew her parents—the best and at the same time the most exclusive people in the world—would never think of allowing her to marry. All our communications were in secret. She would have eloped with me then if I had asked it. I said we must wait. My position would improve. Her affection, and the thousand little winning ways she had of showing it, had had the effect of making me adore her passionately at last. In accepting her attachment I had also become dependent on it; and her heart never wavered till she had made mine her slave.

'But selfishness was the ground-stone of her nature, and all this surface-growth of devotion was to melt away. You can guess the rest. First I, who had been all in all to her, became second to herself; then other people stepped between us. I grew jealous. We had quarrels—reconciliations. This state of things drove me nearly mad at last. Suddenly our correspondence was discovered. Lord and Lady X. were, of course, highly indignant. But I did not care to plead my cause, for I had reason for more than suspecting my little lady of connivance in the matter, as a convenient means of putting the onus of the break upon her parents. And two months before she had been enchanting me with

as passionate vows and fond words as lovers ever spoke! That cured me—cured me of ever again—forgive me, Miss Noel—trusting a woman's earnest. Shall I go on?

'O, pray go on,' said I; 'your story is even more interesting than your lecture on the three periods of Grecian art.'

'I felt sickened with fashionable life—the wish to naturalise myself in its foreign element was dead—and I thought I would throw myself into a little Bohemianism for a change. It was in those days that I made the acquaintance of your friend Miss Severn.'

He paused. I supplied the blank: understood the story better now, and how the sins of Conny had inevitably been visited on Eva's head.

'After two years of busy idleness I found I had spent all my money without having learnt how to make it. I had still my family to fall back upon, and determined to yield to their wishes and renounce the brush. The prodigal is always welcome, and treated much better than he deserves, so I had no fear. Then came the sudden smash that utterly changed my relation to the world. My father, after some previous losses of fortune, of which I had been ignorant, was entirely ruined in a commercial crisis. He had been ailing at the time, and died a few months after from the effects of the shock. Then, almost without warning, I, who had never before had the need to struggle, or to ask for anything or put myself out for anybody, found I was penniless, in debt, with a mother and sisters to support. I took what I thought the best chance open to me—set to earn my living and theirs by my pen.

'I never wish my bitterest enemy anything worse,' he resumed vehemently: 'to see his

old friends drop off, or at best meet him with galling patronage; to have to curry favour where earning will never win it; to prostitute his abilities to the service of gods that pay; to live among ever-increasing temptations to put his scruples, his higher aims—not to say his honesty—in his pocket—'

'Men have passed even that ordeal,' I observed, 'and yet not swerved from their standard.'

'Fewer than you think,' he replied trenchantly. 'As for me, I grew desperate, cynical,—felt all the saving strength in me played out; shut my eyes not to see how I was being dragged down. I was very fast sinking into the mire from which no man ever gets up quite intact again, when a happy chance extricated me. There was my lucky star once more. The change all came about before I knew why. But looking back now, I see and acknowledge that the steady good fortune that has been mine these six years I owe entirely to a single friend—Jasper Gerard.'

'Jasper Gerard?'

'That was his name. A man I had known slightly before our reverses. We met again by accident; but after that he looked me up. And if ever a fellow did do another a good turn—Really, Miss Noel, if you stare so hard at that Gorgon's head you will turn to stone yourself presently.'

'Never mind,' said I heedlessly. 'What did he do?'

'O, a mere trifle at first—got me to come and help him to catalogue the books in his father's library; then put me in the way of obtaining some remunerative literary work, more congenial than the hack-writing I was then bound to. He was very young, but already had a good deal of personal influence with influential people. We became friends. I think it

was working with him, fraternising with him, seeing and catching his sound interest in things, that first made me see life straight again. Gerard was rich; and the chances are that, if I had always been poor myself, I should only have envied him now—grudged him his power to be generous. But I had been rich too, and knew that, though thousands a year may or may not spoil a first-rate nature, they can never make one. At his age, if I had seen a fellow like myself going to the devil I should, in the first place, never have taken much trouble to stop him; and if I had, my pains would probably have been thrown away.

'Thanks to him, I recovered the spirit to begin the battle again. My family were now rather better off, and I had only myself to think of. But my health, which I had done my best to spoil during those worst years, threatened me with a serious break-down. Then Gerard persuaded me to come abroad with him. We saw Italy, Greece, the East.' And he paused.

'Of course no man cares to be dependent on another,' he resumed, 'and I worked pretty hard then, even while we were on the wing. Still, travelling with Gerard, there was no anxiety. He had friends everywhere, and in important quarters. All this brought me to the front again. I had now only to make good my claim to keep my place there in my own right. It is easy to deserve a thing after you have got it. Now I might have gone on fretting, wasting, exhausting my energies till they were worn out, before I so much as found an opening, but for one man who stopped me when I was half-way down the hill. He was no saint either; but the whole calendar could never be worth what he

was, to me. What did he do it for? I wasn't even his friend, in the first instance. Did he even know what he was doing? For don't you think, Miss Noel, there are certain natures going about whose mere companionship recruits and elevates, like Shakespeare and the classics?'

'So Mr. Gerard was one of these?'

'There are services of a kind a man can never repay,' he continued. 'He always made light of them himself—seemed surprised at any allusion. We parted at last. I had obtained through his introduction an appointment abroad that suited me exactly, and allowed me the leisure I wanted, to study and write. Perhaps it may have given him some pleasure since to hear of my name in more or less honourable places, where it would hardly have stood but for him.'

After a pause he resumed in altogether a different tone:

'I saw him again last year in Rome, but he was married.'

'O, yes,' I rejoined; 'and I must tell you that he married a girl I knew very well as a child.'

'Indeed! You know Mrs. Jasper Gerard?'

'Exactly. Very handsome, is she not?'

'Ye-es,' he said, with a wry face. 'But it staggered me, I confess; and even now I cannot swallow it. That Jasper Gerard should end by taking for the wife of his bosom such an out-and-out daughter of Philistia—'

'Mr. Grey,' I rejoined hastily, 'Mr. Gerard was only marrying into his mother's people.'

'Miss Noel, for shame! You know as well as I do that Philistinism is a creed, not a birth-right, or you and I should be Philistines ourselves. But what is the matter with your Medusa? Those snake-locks are all awry.'

'Tell me,' said I, trying hard to smother the eagerness I feared must burn through my words; 'Mrs. Gerard and her husband—how did they seem?'

'O, happy, fond of each other still, and all that,' he replied carelessly; 'but that can't last, you know.'

I looked up at him, and laughed, with a pang of pleasure.

'One more question,' I asked, rising to collect my crayons as I spoke. 'You must forgive my curiosity. What has become of Conny?'

'Conny? O, she married, not long after my departure from the scene, a young lord on the turf, her cousin, a fool who plays prince consort to her queen quite meekly, I'm told. But don't go,' he said, detaining me; 'why are you in such a hurry?'

'But only look at my Medusa; she is spoilt.'

'Let me do her for you,' he said.

In a few minutes his quick hand and practised eye had accomplished the sketch—a vivid likeness of the original—which he presented to me, saying,

'And now that you have my history, Miss Noel, tell me frankly what you think of me. I wanted you to know me as I am, and the ups and downs I have passed through. I wanted you to know that I have not always been good friends with society, as you see me now. You can't call me an adventurer or an impostor,' he added playfully. 'I have told you exactly how the good metal in me was tried and worn away, I may say corroded.'

'Till Mr. Gerard cured you,' said I.

'There was one thing he couldn't cure,' said Mr. Grey, speaking low, and stooping down to look into my face, with a half-smile.

'And that was?'

'The contempt for women that Conny had taught me.'

'You are very ungrateful,' said I; for I was fond of teasing him about his female worshippers. 'Mr. Grey, if you had happened to die this winter, you would certainly have had a monument raised to you at Ludwigsheim, like that of Frauenlob the Minnesinger, representing all the ladies weeping inconsolably round your bier.'

He laughed and shook his head.

'If I am cured, it is not his doing either that has worked the miracle.'

'Ah, to be sure; that was reserved for Mrs. Meredith,' said I cheerfully.

'Mrs. Meredith! What on earth do you mean?'

'She, or her cousin Charlotte.'

His countenance changed, and he said, speaking fast and low,

'Not her, nor any one but you. Listen one moment more. You have not heard my confession to the end yet.'

His light hand touched my shoulder; his keen hazel eyes, as mesmeric in their way as Medusa's, brightened eagerly, and he continued:

'For you I would unsay all the cynical things I ever said. For you I could forgive Conny—*thank* her—that she and her treachery set me free. You are like her in the face, but it is another soul that looks out of your eyes. You are the reality of which she was the false reflection. *Your* earnest I could trust.'

Was it Albert Grey speaking, he of whom Sophie had so confidently asserted that she knew, and he knew, that he must ever remain fancy free? I felt myself flushing and trembling a little. The strong will and wakeful mind of that man were not without their power to perplex and bewilder mine.

'I know what you mean about

Mrs. Meredith,' he said, 'and the pretty little cousin she wants me to marry. But even she doesn't ask me to lose my heart to Charlotte. And I care for no living woman's but yours.'

Averting my face to escape his look, I met the cold frozen stare of the Medusa. She seemed to be laughing at us. I turned back to him.

'Ask me for anything, but not for love. I should give you a stone. Once, when I was asleep, or dreaming, Medusa came and looked at me, and that was what happened,' I said, and laughed.

Again his bright incisive eyes sought mine, urgently straining, as it were, to master my volition by the force of the spirit within. For the first time I met their gaze without flinching. Medusa smiled triumphant above us as I concluded,

'For this once, believe me, you may trust a woman's earnest.'

When, that night, I related to Eva all that had passed, she confessed that, cured herself of her old love by his indifference, she had for long been cherishing secret visions of seeing me become Mrs. Albert Grey. My resolution astonished, my shrinking puzzled her. I had always been the first to praise his charm, his talents, his penetration, his tact, and so forth.

'He is of course perfectly unlike Mr. Gerard,' she hazarded. 'I have never seen two men, both so nice and so clever, and yet so different in every other possible way. But I used to fancy that for that very reason you might perhaps have—'

'You were making a great mistake,' I broke in. 'Will you never know me, Eva? You thought there was a chance of my being taken by his opposite, because

it would remind me least, and might have good points he had not. Child, I see a trace, a shadow of his type from time to time, and it draws me like a magnet. There was a friend of the Merediths with a voice like his—the greatest bore, the man was—yet I liked nothing so well as to talk to him the whole evening long. You may laugh, if you choose. I don't tell it you as a fine thing—certainly not as a wise thing—but as a fact. There is a boy who fills the buckets at the Brunnen in the court here, who has something of Jasper in his face. Often and often I wait at the window just to see him come and go. The colour of his hair, his intonation, his tricks in speaking, no matter where I meet them—in a labourer or a grand duke, a stranger or a friend—will give me a feeling you can never understand; and one beside which everything that I could ever feel for Albert Grey, had he ten times his own perfections, would seem stone cold and dead.'

By a fortunate accident, Eva and I, by staying so long in the sculpture-gallery, had caught bad colds, which served as an excuse for absenting ourselves from Mrs. Meredith's evenings for a week or two after this. If she had been on the *qui vive*, Mr. Grey soon lulled her suspicions by renewing his attentions to Lolotte, this time very pointedly. The girl only asked to be won; there was no excuse for prolonging the chapter. Betrothal and bridal followed speedily in the spring; so speedily, that sometimes I could doubt the reality of that scene among the marbles, but that I have kept Lolotte's lover's sketch of the Medusa in *memoriam* of the episode that ended then and there.

(To be continued.)

AN AFTERNOON AT A PEKIN THEATRE.

THE announcement that a famous *troupe* of Chinese comedians were to give a performance of unusual brilliancy, and the recommendations of Professor Li, an accomplished amateur of the dramatic art, for me on no account to allow the opportunity to slip, led to my paying a visit to the principal theatre of Peking. I had already seen the *Palan Flower snatched away* performed at Shanghai, but this was a piece written in the Soochow dialect, and some of the parts had been sustained by women, a thing contrary to law since the Emperor Tchien Loung had raised an actress to the dignity of an imperial concubine, and now only tolerated in the treaty ports. The Peking theatre is a large square building, one side of which is occupied by the stage, while running round the other three are wooden galleries. I took my place at a table in one of these, in company with my friend the Professor, and sipped a cup of unsweetened tea handed me by the servants, while the venerable Li regaled himself with dried water-melon seeds and Tientsin grapes. There were no females present, as at Shanghai and Canton, where the fair sex, attired in gossamer silks or furs, according to the season of the year, and with their hair adorned with natural flowers, lean indolently against a couple of female servants who carry their pipes and fans. But young apprentice actors, recalling our 'Children of the Revels' of a former century, kept passing from table to table, offering pipes to the worthy tradesmen who formed a large

proportion of the audience, or drinking with them a cup of hot Chao-Chin wine. In their elegant theatrical costume—wide crimson trousers, large hanging sleeves of bright blue, and a couple of long peacock's feathers waving like antennæ on either side of their gilt head-dresses—they resembled huge bright-coloured beetles. From the habit of acting, their gait, attitudes, and gestures had something measured and affected; still they were by no means ungraceful. All these youths, I was informed, had received a distinguished literary education.

A cacophonous overture, chiefly sustained by continuously thundering gongs and shrieking fiddles, mingled with the doleful notes of glass trumpets and bamboo flutes, and the strongly marked rhythm of castanets and tambourine, came to an end, and the performance commenced. The first piece, according to a written programme, sold like our own throughout the house, was an historic opera, or drama intended to be sung, entitled, *Ta tchin tche*, or the *Golden Branch beaten*, which in the language of every-day life means the 'Emperor's Daughter thrashed.' After a procession of eunuchs, uttering feminine cries, the Emperor, wearing a robe embroidered with precious stones, and with a long white beard, made his appearance, and softly sang, 'The golden crow appears in the east, the jade rabbit has sunk towards the west, the bell of the brilliant sun has sounded thrice;' all of which simply meant that the sun had

risen, the moon had set, and the Emperor had left his private apartments, an event sufficiently important to be notified to all the world by three strokes of a bell.

Still singing, the sovereign continued to relate the troubles of his reign: how a dangerous revolt headed by An Lou Chan, the lover of his concubine, Tang kouei, had only been quelled after superhuman efforts by his general Couodze In. 'I am now happy,' he chants in conclusion, 'for the earth is tranquil, the sea calm, the river beautiful, and the Fong Houang' (the king of the birds) 'is about to descend;' an incident which only occurs when the sovereign is virtuous, as in the case of the Emperor Kang Shi.

The Empress now arrives, and thus announces her coming: 'I have left the Radiant Sun, and I come to the Golden Palace to approach the Ten Thousand Years;' which, stripped of all hyperbole, signifies, 'I have come from my chamber to the throne-room to see the Emperor.' The latter inquires the reason of this visit; and the lady replies, 'Your rapid courser,' that is, the Emperor's son-in-law, 'has dared, for I know not what reason, to brutally strike our daughter.' The daughter here introduced upon the scene relates the circumstances of the insult. 'He returned to the palace intoxicated,' remarks she, 'and quarrelled with me, saying that it was his father and he who drove away the rebels and restored you to your throne. I answered nothing; at which he became furious and struck the Golden Branch, calling me a girl who does not know how to blush, an idiot who puts off new clothes to put on old ones. Moreover, he wanted me, a jade leaf of the Golden Branch, to kotow before my mother-in-law.' The Empress, who in her humility affects the

title of concubine, joins her daughter in demanding vengeance for the outrage; and on the Emperor desiring them both to retire, assuring them that justice shall be done, the young lady admonishingly warbles as she makes her exit, 'If you do not have him decapitated, the jade leaf of the Golden Branch will not feel satisfied.'

The Emperor administers to her a mild reproof, and then sings aloud to his attendants, 'Eunuchs, your Emperor commands you to introduce my imperial elder brother Couodze In.' The injunction is at once obeyed, and Couodze In slowly advances up the stage, accompanied by his son Couo Ai, who, bound with cords, is thus rebuked by him: 'Little slave, your act was that of a madman. The Emperor loved you as he loved his daughter. Whatever induced you to get intoxicated and beat her? In a few seconds your head will fall. Alas, I am very old, and my garments will be stained with blood.' To which the young man responds somewhat chirpily, 'My father, no more of these lachrymose lamentations. She is the daughter of the Emperor, it is true, but after all she is my wife. I will prostrate myself before my sovereign, who will hardly order me to be flayed alive.'

By this time they have arrived in presence of the Emperor, who addresses Couodze In with much condescension. 'You alone restored me my kingdom. I am Emperor, and you are only a mandarin; still I will not permit you to kneel before me. Eunuchs, bring a gilt arm-chair. The Emperor and the mandarin are about to discuss affairs of state.' Here Couo Ai makes his presence known by exclaiming that his bonds hurt him; whereupon the Emperor de-

mands, 'Who is the mandarin's son that is bound outside the door? Answer me, my elder brother.' The father sings in response, 'It is my son Couo Ai, who in a regrettable state of inebriation struck your daughter without any cause. I have brought him here to receive his punishment—to have, in fact, his head cut off.'

'Gently,' sings the indulgent Emperor; 'elder brother, you are going a little too far. Couo Ai is a very young man, and my daughter a very young woman. An old proverb says that however wise a mandarin may be it is very difficult for him to rule his household. In my opinion Couo Ai should not be punished. Unfasten his bonds, eunuchs, and replace his mourning garments by a court dress.' At this the father overwhelms the Emperor with his thanks, while the son proceeds to explain how the unfortunate affair arose. 'My wife,' says he, 'refused to prostrate herself before my father on his birthday, although my brothers and their wives did so without exception.' 'It is well,' exclaims the monarch; 'you show proper filial respect.' Thereupon, not only does the Emperor abstain from punishing his son-in-law, but, out of gratitude for the services rendered by the latter, presents him with a scarlet robe embroidered over with golden dragons, a tablet commemorative of his heroism and his filial virtues, to be hung up in his hall of reception, and a sword of justice with which he is privileged to decapitate any culprit without previously obtaining the imperial sanction.

The Golden Branch is now sent for, and to her great astonishment finds herself admonished in this fashion: 'In not going and prostrating yourself before your father-in-law you have failed in your duty towards the Emperor, your

parents, and your husband. I give you a cup of precious wine, which you shall offer to your father-in-law at his palace, as a token of repentance. In future do not come here unless I send for you.' After this display of pretended indignation, the sovereign musingly remarks, 'Couo Ai deserved punishment, but could I make my daughter a widow? Not only have I refrained from punishing him, but I have given him presents in acknowledgment of the heroism which he and his father displayed in defence of my dynasty.'

A warlike drama followed. Processions of 'supers' with banners of different colours, according to the party they belonged to, passed up and down the stage. Princes magnificently arrayed in gilt cuirasses and velvet boots, and accoutred with huge quivers and broad stiff belts, and with their faces painted red and black, kept blowing into their beards to indicate the violence of their anger, insulted each other in song, and met in single combat with mace and lance. They bounded in turn like tigers or acrobats over their adversary's head, and broke off in the midst of their encounters to drink a cup of tea brought to them by a servant in ordinary modern attire. One of them suddenly gave vent to a shrill cry, like the crow of a cock, and then the audience, usually so apathetic, warmed as it were by these various feats, the glitter of lances and battle-axes, and the waving of multitudinous banners, began to exclaim, 'Hao, hao!' in sign of approbation.

The actors, despite their strange and conventional style, are not devoid of talent, but the absence of scenery and properties necessitates having recourse to some singular manoeuvres. If a warrior

wishes to mount his steed, he takes several strides in a majestic manner, lifts his right foot from the ground, and swings his leg over the back of an imaginary animal. The audience understand from this that he is now in the saddle, and when he switches the air with a stick they know that he has started off full gallop. A severe-looking old man, broken down by age, advances, holding in either hand a square of canvas on which is painted a wheel. This signifies that the Emperor has arrived in his chariot. An upright mandarin, unappreciated by his sovereign, flies in desperation to a wood. His mother follows him, carrying in front of her a canvas representation of a rock, which, after having expressed her sorrows in song, she deposits in a corner. The son, on his part, resolves to set fire to the forest, and to avenge himself in Chinese fashion by committing suicide. A resinous torch is brought to him, and he lights it, thereby giving the audience to understand that the forest is on fire. He next brandishes the torch and blackens his face with the smoke. The mother utters shrieks; but disregarding them he opens his mouth, bites as it were at the flame, and falls, supposed to be reduced to something like a cinder.

For the moderate outlay of from six to seven taio—that is to say, from three shillings to three shillings and sixpence—any spectator is privileged to have the programme of the entertainment varied according to his fancy. Profiting by this circumstance, after three noisy spectacular entertainments I was able to witness a 'shiao shi,' that is, a realistic representation of an ordinary incident of modern life, entitled, *Fou Pang tseung tchouo*, or *Fou Pang lets fall his Bracelet*. The charac-

ters were four in number—Mrs. Shen, the widow of Mr. Soun; Miss Soun-yu-tchiao, her daughter; Mr. Fou Pang, a young bachelor; and an old woman, who acts as matrimonial agent.

At the commencement of the piece the young lady is discovered soliloquising on the loneliness of her condition: 'Sad, with frowning brows, I embroider to kill time; with my long sleeves I wipe away my tears; always, with me, new griefs succeed to old ones. I raise the lattice, and in melancholy mood regard the chrysanthemums. I have not courage to dress my hair near the window. I complain of my sad lot and am vexed with myself; the destiny of all pretty women, it is well known, is unhappy. My name is Soun-yu-tchiao; my father is dead, my mother remains a widow; our fortune is slender. I am already eighteen, and have not yet a husband. My mother is absorbed in her devotions; morning and night she prostrates herself before Buddha, burns perfumes and neglects the household affairs, so that I am not likely to see the day of my happiness approach. When I think of this my tears flow like the rain of an autumn night, and each drop is a real grief to me.'

The Chinese women, as a rule, are very superstitious, and several times a day they burn in honour of Buddha, of the genii of the kitchen, and of the wicked spirits, sham ingots of gold and silver paper, regarding the value of which these deities, if deceived at all, must certainly be somewhat sceptical. They are continually running to the pagodas to consult the bonzes respecting their own healths and that of their children, when the priests of Buddha, instead of prescribing castor-oil or quinine, order a certain number of little bits of paper, inscribed over

with cabalistic characters, to be burnt before an idol, and the ashes swallowed by the patient in a cup of tea. Mrs. Shen, who now makes her appearance, is a woman of this class, and observes that those who wish to escape from the tumult of the world must put all ordinary preoccupations aside. To her daughter's question as to why she has risen so early, she replies: 'I heard of the arrival of a pilgrim bonze, and have been listening to his explanation of the sacred books.' The daughter sneers at the bonze in question; which greatly irritates the mother, who threatens her with the enduring punishment meted out to the wicked, and orders her to go on with her embroidery until she returns at mid-day to prepare their repast.

Left alone, the young girl resumes her soliloquy, alternately singing and speaking. After lamenting her uncertain future, she notices that the door of the house is closed; why should she not set it ajar and amuse herself a little? 'Quite alone, shut up in the inner room! quite alone! alone I sit, alone I lie down! Poor pretty women, whose lot is so hard! Much sadness, many tears! I know well enough that it is not proper for a young girl like me to stand at the door, but it is only for a moment, and nothing extraordinary is likely to happen.' At this juncture the long-wished-for lover makes his appearance, gaily warbling, 'I am taking a stroll merely to amuse myself, and will pass before the door of the Soun family. I observe a charming creature as beautiful as Tchangho' (the divine beauty inhabiting the moon); 'I perceive her pretty face, so tender that a breath of air, a fillip from a feather, would lacerate it. At the sight of her I am bereft alike of

soul and senses.' Here the young gentleman gives over singing, and soliloquises also: 'Attention! this beautiful person must be the daughter of the widow Shen; her physical charms excel those of all other women in the empire. I am Fou Pang. To make her my wife is the object of my ardent desire. I should like to speak to her, but unhappily the rites forbid a young girl to converse with a young man.' At this point he breaks out into song again: 'Although we are neighbours I have not the right to infringe the rules of decorum. I dare not offend in any such manner. Besides, there is nothing in common between us. I am a man of family, I have the pride of my rank; I should be afraid of the ridicule and contempt of the people of the neighbourhood; I hesitate, and yet my heart is on fire. Shall I let slip so favourable an opportunity? I will pretend to lose something: it is a good mode of arriving at a marriage.'

Fou Pang, with a lover's indifference to the rites, determines upon addressing the damsel, and the following dialogue ensues: 'A question, miss, if you please; is this Mother Soun's?' 'Yes, sir, it is.' 'Another question, if you please; is Mother Soun at home?' 'My mother, sir, is not at home.' 'Ah, you are Miss Soun then? I salute you.' 'Sir, I salute you in return. A question, sir. What is your lofty name, what are your rich forenames? what is the reason you ask me if my mother is at home?' 'My name, miss, is Fou, my forename is Pang, my fancy-name is Yun Tchang. I inhabit the lane in front. I have heard that in your residence you breed good cocks; I wish to buy a couple.' 'We have, indeed, some cocks, sir, but I cannot sell them in my mother's absence.'

'Since, miss, your noble mother is not at home, I will buy them elsewhere.' 'As you please, sir,' replies the young girl; to which Fou Pang politely rejoins, 'Miss, I take the liberty to retire.'

As the amorous swain is leaving, he remarks to himself, 'I will loosen my bracelet, which I wish to be the gage of our betrothal. I will let it fall from my sleeve while bowing. If she picks it up there are nine chances to ten that the marriage will take place. I will go at once and ask my mother to find a third party to arrange the affair.'

The young lady now sings: 'On leaving me he had a smiling air; he saluted me, and intentionally let fall a jade bracelet. Why should not we become husband and wife? why should we not imitate the couples of mandarin ducks that sport among the water-lilies? I should then have some one to lean upon until my death.'

The third person, who is indispensable to all Chinese marriages, here appears in the form of an old woman, who had seen the bracelet fall from a distance: 'These two young people,' observes she, 'smile lovingly at each other; their passion is warm, and only an intermediary is needed to arrange the marriage. The desire of gain is aroused in my old body, and why should I not secure the price of this mediation? I am the mother of the pork-butcher Leon Piao; my name is Hou Che, the go-between. An instant ago I perceived Mr. Fou in company of Miss Shen; their glances met, and on parting he let fall a bracelet. The brokerage of this business shall not escape me.'

It is now the young lady's turn, and she proceeds to warble: 'I gaze at this bracelet of jade by the light of the lamp. I do nothing but sigh; my tears fall one by one like pearls.' Mrs. Hou Che here interposes: 'Miss, console yourself; I will bring him to you, and you will converse together at your ease. Will that suit you?' 'Alas, madam,' replies the young girl, 'we are very poor; I have no gage to send him.' To which the old woman rejoins: 'In exchange for the bracelet a pair of embroidered slippers will do very well.' On the damsel handing these to her she promises to bring an answer within three days' time, which calls forth endless protestations of gratitude on the part of the love-sick Soun-yut-chiao. 'Fix the day when you will bring him to me,' exclaims she; 'it will be a good action, and I will be as grateful to you as to the mother who gave me birth. It is useless to ask me if I desire this marriage. I could live happily with him even as his second wife, and die peaceably with closed eyes.' The old woman bids her be easy in her mind, to go on with her embroidery, and keep the house-door shut until the happy moment arrives. 'I turn up the wick of the lamp and I await the phoenix,' replies the young girl; to which the old woman rejoins: 'That is my business; I undertake to bring the butterfly into the garden.' 'Perfect!' exclaims Miss Soun; 'a pretty butterfly will enter the garden.' With which little speech this trifling sketch of modern Chinese manners comes to an abrupt close.

THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.

CHAPTER XXI.

LOUIS DE ROCHEMAR.

WHILE Mme. de Valmont was waiting in the little Parisian salon for its owner, who did not seem inclined to appear, Mme. de Saint-Hilaire and Agnes were just arriving at Rochemar.

Agnes almost forgot her own consternation and shame at Frank's behaviour in the admiration she felt for her aunt. Not one harsh word had passed the old Comtesse's lips against Marie, the child she had brought up; whose weak and delicate youth she had tended so carefully, whose happiness she had studied, who had been for so long the one object of all her thoughts and doings. After the first anxiety, when the truth was too plain to all eyes, she was very silent; she poured out no blame on any one. When the old shepherdess came, with tears running down her withered cheeks, and penitently confessed the meeting in the avenue, begging her mistress to forgive her for her stupid silence, the Comtesse looked at her sadly, and stretched out a kind hand.

'Do not distress yourself, ma pauvre femme. It is not your fault. They would have escaped in spite of you. Do not spread this news about the country,' she added, addressing the group of servants. 'Now go to bed, all of you. Good-night, Agnes.'

On Wednesday she was down early as usual. When Agnes joined her she was just come in from the yard, and was standing

in the salon with her hat on, and her stick in her hand. Peloton sat at a little distance, looking at her. He might well look, Agnes thought with a sudden shiver, as she caught the first glimpse of her aunt in an opposite mirror. There was a stoop in her upright shoulders, the hand that held her stick trembled, and her usually placid face looked worn and haggard. Sleep had been far from her eyes that night, it was plain enough.

'Bon jour, ma chère,' she said, turning quietly to Agnes as she came in. 'Will you put on your hat, and go with me by and by to Rochemar?'

'Yes, ma tante,' said Agnes faintly. Then she came forward, took the old woman's hand and kissed it, and looked up into her face through suddenly falling tears. 'I don't know how you can speak so kindly to me, or how you can endure the sight of me, when my brother has been so wicked, so ungrateful—'

'I like justice myself,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'This affair makes you unhappy enough, I can see that. You are not responsible for other people's doings. I was a foolish old woman, it seems, to trust Frank as I did; but who would have imagined—you had no suspicion?'

'Suspicion that he dreamed of this? No, indeed. I knew that he was very fond of Marie, and that her engagement was a trouble to him.'

'So did I. He confessed all that to me last Sunday. What falseness! I was utterly de-

ceived. A character, too, that seemed so open and so gentle. Now if it had been John! There is something odd and reserved about John.

'Ah!' cried Agnes, 'indeed you do not understand them. Johnny has an absent manner, but he is truthful, sincere, unselfish, honourable. Poor Frank—one cannot wish to blame him any more, but he has always had a way of thinking of himself first. He never cared very much how he got what he wanted, or what pain he gave; but this is beyond anything I ever dreamed of.'

'Not much chance of happiness for my poor Marie, with a temper like that,' said the Comtesse. 'She has chosen a sad fate for herself. With her peculiar character, it was necessary that her husband should be very amiable—patient, unselfish, compassionate. I knew that very well, and I had found a person who had all these virtues. Poor Louis! They are happy at Rochemar this morning. I cannot wait for them to come here. I must go and tell them the heart-breaking news.'

So in the course of that sad morning they climbed the hill to Rochemar. As Auguste stopped his horses under the high arched entrance of the cour d'honneur, somebody in a velvet coat came forward into the gateway. A short dark-complexioned young man, with a grave countenance, and a black moustache, and small pointed beard.

'There is the Marquis. Ah, que c'est navrant!' sighed Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

M. de Rochemar came up and opened the carriage-door, and offered his hand to help her out, his face suddenly brightened and transfigured by a very sweet smile.

'Here I am returned' at last,

madame,' he said. 'I hope to pay you a visit this afternoon.'

'We will talk of that presently,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'I am charmed to see you looking so well. Let me present you to my niece, Mdle. Wyatt.'

'Bon jour, mademoiselle,' said the Marquis, bowing. 'I have heard of you already from my mother, and of messieurs vos frères too. I hope to make their acquaintance.'

'Merci, monsieur,' said Agnes. 'I am afraid we are all going away at once.'

'Ah, I hope not,' said M. de Rochemar; and then he offered his arm to Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, who was walking very feebly into the house. 'May I ask for mademoiselle your granddaughter? Agnes heard him say, as she followed him.

'No. I have something to tell you,—but your mother must hear it too.'

'Dear madame, you frighten me.'

'Have a moment's patience.'

M. Louis said no more, but took her into the salon, where his mother appeared immediately, hurrying to meet them with delighted exclamations.

'But where is our angel? Where is the Flower of Anjou? You have not had the heart to leave her behind!'

'You ask me where she is, madame,' said the old Comtesse, supporting herself on her stick, and leaning with the other hand on the back of a chair. For a moment she seemed unable to say anything more; she looked from Louis to his mother, and shook her head.

There was something in her manner so solemn and so terrible that the lively Mme. de Rochemar stood for an instant as if she was turned to stone. Then she

glanced at Agnes, and shrieked, striking her hands together,

'Ah, mon Dieu! What has happened? Mademoiselle is crying. Is she dead, then, our angel!'

'Madame, I entreat of you, tell us the worst at once,' said M. de Rochemar. As he spoke he went up to his mother and took both her trembling hands in his. 'Calm yourself, ma mère.'

'Listen, then,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'She is gone. She left Les Sapinières last night, and Heaven knows that I would give all I have to be able to tell you where she is now. We have lost her.'

'Did she go alone?' said M. de Rochemar, turning very pale, but stilling his mother with an affectionate pressure of her hands.

'No. With her English cousin, Frank Wyatt. Agnes, mon enfant,' said the old woman, turning suddenly to her niece, 'this is painful for you. I should not have brought you here. But your brother's fault is not yours.'

'No, indeed,' said M. de Rochemar. 'But I am grieved and shocked to think that—'

'Ah, I cannot bear it!' cried his mother, throwing herself into a seat, and bursting out into a passion of hysterical crying.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, still leaning on the back of a chair, stooped forward and covered her face with her hand.

'Come with me, ma très-chère,' said Louis tenderly, putting his arm round his mother. 'Pardon, madame; I will come back to you in a moment.'

'Ma tante, would not you sit down?' said Agnes, when the mother and son had left the room together.

'No,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

But when the Marquis returned he brought forward an

armchair, and gently insisted on her taking it. Agnes was obliged to do the same, and then he stood still for a moment in front of them. Agnes could see that he was very much moved, and hardly knew whether she felt more pity or admiration for this man, whose joyful hopes had met with such a downfall, and who could yet command himself, putting aside all appearance of resentment, or even surprise, and be ready with steady tenderness to dry a weak woman's tears.

'Have we been mistaken all this time?' he said. 'My mother gave me to understand that Mdlle. Marie accepted me of her own free will. Was not that the case, madame?'

'I assure you that it was,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'This terrible thing is as great a surprise to me as to you.'

'And the English gentleman,' said M. de Rochemar, with an apologetic glance at Agnes—'did she know him before? Was it perhaps a long hopeless attachment?'

'No, indeed. She never saw him till after she was engaged to you. I had the greatest confidence in him—so had every one else. It must be confessed that they were much together, and that he occupied himself a great deal with her amusement. But that, you know, in England, is the way with young people, especially if they are related to each other. Still I should have been more watchful. It was my fault.'

'I fear that cette pauvre demoiselle must have suffered very much before she felt herself driven to such a step,' said M. de Rochemar. 'Had I only been here sooner I might have seen it, and withdrawn myself. I would not have stood in the way of her happiness.'

'You are too generous,' said Mme de Saint-Hilaire. 'I can only hope that you may in time find a wife more worthy of you. I know that Marie has thrown away her happiness. There is no trust to be placed in a person who could do as Frank has done. He has lived in my house, won my confidence, and then stolen away my only treasure.'

'When did it happen?' said M. de Rochemar. 'Have you any idea where they are gone?'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire told him all the sad story, going through the circumstances slowly and emphatically. The Marquis sat down, frowning, and leaned his head on his hand.

'Ma tante,' said Agnes, suddenly coming forward, 'I believe it was all my fault. I might have prevented it.'

'How, my child?'

'Pardon, mademoiselle,' said Louis, looking up at her. 'It is most likely that no one could have prevented it.'

'But listen to me,' said Agnes. 'Frank told me one day, some time ago, about his affection for Marie, and that he believed she cared for him. I told him he ought to go away. He would not hear of that. I suppose I ought not to have held my tongue and let things take their course, as I did; but I trusted him. I was sorry for him; but, of course, I thought he was perfectly hopeless.'

'You acted quite naturally, my dear,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'I trusted him too, and did very much the same. When he spoke to me on Sunday, as I have told you, Louis, he offered to go away at once, if I thought it better. I begged him to stay. We have made a sad mess of it amongst us, but certainly I was the blindest and the most to

blame. The thought of being allied with you was a great happiness to me, and I am sorry indeed to give it up. You perhaps already feel that it is fortunate for you. It will not be long before my poor Marie finds out her mistake—deceived like all of us, but the most terribly of all. I had better not stay here,' she said, getting up. 'I should like to know how your mother is, and then my niece and I will return home. Is the carriage there?'

'Do not think of leaving us yet, I beg of you, madame,' said M. de Rochemar. 'We cannot remain in this state of miserable uncertainty. Surely you wish to know where Mdle. Marie is gone, and what she is doing? I understand that you have not even any proof that she has left Carillon. When our friends leave us in this way, we cannot at once lose all interest in them.'

'That is true enough,' said the Comtesse wearily. 'But how are we to find out these things? I thought we could only wait for a letter. She is not so unnatural as to leave me long in suspense.'

'I hope not; but three or four days may pass before the letter comes. We must try and ascertain something in the mean while. We will make no public inquiries; but I have friends enough at Carillon to find out anything I want to know. Will you let me carry out my little plan?'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire had sat down again, and was looking up wistfully into the grave face opposite her, darkened by the African sun, and now hiding all deep feeling under a quiet matter-of-fact expression. The Marquis was certainly a strong contrast to tall, graceful, refined-looking Frank Wyatt; yet there was a soldierly dignity about him, a real naturalness and unaffected honesty which

did not really lose in comparison with the careless easy openness of Frank. Art often beats Nature in these things, and it is only a connoisseur who can always distinguish between the copy and the original.

'Then what do you want me to do?' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'I want you and mademoiselle your niece to stay here and take care of my mother, while I go to Carillon. My poor mother cannot be left alone.'

'I will do as you wish. But listen to me a moment. It is very wrong that you should do this. You ought to have nothing more to say to us. You have been treated in the most dreadful way by this girl, and you still care what becomes of her? Let somebody else take all this trouble. It is not your place.'

'Madame, I did not think you wished to give me up as a friend. Say nothing more about it, I beg. I have known Mdlle. Marie for many years, and I think no one has a better right to take an interest in her.'

Louis came forward, and kissed the old lady's hand; then he made a low bow to Agnes, and left the room without saying any more.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire rocked herself backwards and forwards in her chair, and sighed deeply once or twice.

'Well, Agnes, what do you think of him?'

'Ma tante, there is something about him that makes one think of the old paladins.'

'You are right. We have not many such in the world now. He is like his father, who was the most chivalrous gentleman in France. Ah, Marie, thou little stupid one, what a parti hast thou thrown away!'

M. le Marquis de Rochemar muffled himself up in a large scarf, for the air was cold that October morning, jumped into his dog-cart, and drove off at a great pace. He had not a very clear idea of what he was going to do, but of one thing he was pretty sure—that he would succeed in finding out whether Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire and her English lover had left Carillon station; and if so, by what train.

CHAPTER XXII.

EN CACHETTE.

FRANK WYATT had made one great mistake, as the cleverest people sometimes do, perhaps fortunately for their less brilliant fellow-creatures. If he wished to keep his stolen prize, he should at all risks have carried it off with him at once. To leave Maria to her own reflections, shut up for so many hours in the Château de Carillon, deprived of the excitement of his presence, and with nothing to do but to wait and think things over, was about the most stupid thing he could have done.

She found herself almost imprisoned in a small cell-like room, where Mme. d'Yves, her hostess or gaoler, was constantly looking in upon her, with nods and glances and scraps of encouragement that jarred dreadfully on the little demoiselle. The first sign of reaction, which came on so early as Tuesday night, was a return of all her former prejudice against Mme. d'Yves and her black eyes. She hated her, and would hardly answer when she spoke to her, quite forgetting how grateful she ought to be for the ready good-nature and hospitality which had made her elopement such an easy

affair. Madame d'Yves remarked to her husband that she hoped M. Wyatt would be able to manage the young lady: she was quite beyond her.

Things got worse as the night went on. The wind howled round the old towers and turrets, the river splashed and gurgled, and Marie, wide awake with excitement, fancied all sorts of ghostly noises in the château, to which she was paying her first visit after such a strange fashion. She thought it was very wrong of Frank to bring her to such a place as this, and to leave her in the charge of a woman like Mme. d'Yves. Then came a flood of repentance. What had she been thinking of! How could she have done it! Cruel, wicked, ungrateful girl, to leave her poor grandmother in such terrible anxiety! What was her grandmother doing now? Not sleeping her own healthy peaceful sleep, Marie was quite sure. And then she pictured all the search to herself, the uncertainty, the hunting far and near, the crying and bewailing over the lost child. Ah! could that be the wind, that melancholy noise! it was like somebody crying. Marie crossed herself, and then suddenly felt that she had no right to do that, while she was deliberately committing this dreadful sin. She almost heard her grandmother calling, and then she got up and tried to open the door. It was locked, but she shook it, and cried, 'Grand'mère, grand'mère! Only the moaning wind answered her: that sad cry could never reach her grandmother's anxious ears. There was nothing for it but to lie down again and cry very bitterly, so gradually sobbing herself into a sleep broken by dreams and sudden starts of terror.

In the morning Mme. d'Yves

unlocked the door herself and brought in a cup of coffee. She found Marie already dressed, and walking up and down the room like a captive creature, her face very pale, and her eyes hollow and worn.

'Bon jour, mademoiselle,' said Mme. d'Yves, who looked smart and agreeable in a rose-coloured peignoir trimmed with white lace. 'You have slept well, I hope. Tiens! you are dressed already. I wonder you troubled yourself to get up so early.'

'Thank you, madame,' said Marie. 'You are very good. I have not slept at all.'

'Indeed! what a pity! That was really unwise, mademoiselle, considering the journey that is before us. However, you must rest yourself during the day.'

Marie sighed. 'Why did you trouble yourself to do that, madame!' she said, pointing to the coffee.

'I thought I should like to see how my charge found herself this morning,' said Mme. d'Yves, showing her teeth in a cheerful smile. 'I do not wonder, myself, that you feel upset and disturbed. Such things don't happen every day, and they are seldom thoroughly pleasant at the time.'

'I never went through anything half so dreadful,' said Marie; at which her hostess laughed.

'Allons, mademoiselle, you have not had much to do for yourself. No jumping out of the window, or riding twenty miles, or hiding in woods, or any of those difficulties that one expects on these occasions. Everything has been arranged for you easily enough. I will say for these English gentlemen that they are very considerate. If you had only heard the long discourses that M. Wyatt used to make to me on the subject. He was so unhappy, and I pitied him so much, poor

fellow, that I was obliged to help him. And I think I may say that we arranged the affair very cleverly between us.'

'You did indeed,' said Marie, but her tone of voice was anything but grateful.

'To be sure,' said Mme. d'Yves, 'we are not safely through with it yet. We have to get to Paris; but the worst part is over, now that you are with me. And once in Paris, let them search for you!'

'Ah, mon Dieu!' cried Marie, suddenly sitting down, and hiding her face in her hands.

Mme. d'Yves stood and looked at her, with her hands folded on her peignoir, till one or two long sobs shook the small stooping figure, and tears began to steal through the stiff slender fingers.

'Allons! voyons! what is there to cry about, mademoiselle? One would think everything was going wrong, and that you were to be taken back home and married against your will. It is a bad compliment to ce pauvre monsieur, who has gone off to Paris to prepare for you. Or perhaps it is that the time seems so long. Bien! I am very sorry, but we cannot possibly start till this evening. Not so many hours, after all. Have a little patience, and do not cry, ma petite. It is a pity to spoil your pretty eyes for no reason.'

In the course of her consolations Mme. d'Yves advanced quite close to Marie, and stooped over her, gently touching her soft dark hair. Marie started and shook off the touch, regaining her self-command with a sudden effort, and her hostess retreated several steps, staring at her. She was puzzled, not unnaturally, and perhaps resolved that this should be the last time she would give any help in the love affairs of a young lady of the noblesse.

'Madame,' said Marie, standing up, 'do you really wish to be kind to me?'

'You ask me that, mademoiselle?' with an expressive shrug.

'Then will you send a message for me to my grandmother? It makes me miserable to think how anxious she must be. Just a few words, to tell her that I am safe and well, and that I will write to her from Paris. She will die of anxiety if she hears nothing.'

Mme. d'Yves screwed up her mouth, raised her eyebrows, and looked very grave.

'You should have thought of all that before, mademoiselle,' she said. 'As for sending a message, it is far too dangerous. I could not possibly do such a thing. Why, how should I get you away to Paris, if your grandmother knew you were here? She supposes that you are already hundreds of leagues away. Do not you see that your safety lies in the fact that no one suspects me? Be a little reasonable, je vous en prie.'

'I wish I had never done it,' said Marie. She stopped for a moment, and looked round at the narrow walls of her room with a sort of desperation. 'I am like a prisoner here. I cannot get out, or do anything I choose. What will become of me?'

'Mademoiselle,' said Mme. d'Yves, shaking her head, 'forgive me, but you are too impatient. I am sorry you find yourself so uncomfortable here, but it was part of the plan that you should be carefully hidden in my house for a night and a day. It was done to please you, and if you complain, it is of the fate that you have chosen for yourself. It is absurd for you to think of going out to-day. I gave my word to M. Wyatt that I would keep you safely, and I assure you that I

mean to do it. Take my advice and be contented.'

Marie only answered by something between a sigh and an exclamation of rage. Mme. d'Yves left her to recover her temper, and went away to her husband with uplifted hands and eyes.

'Quel diable de caractère! That poor Englishman! I pity him with all my heart.'

It was two or three hours after this that Mme. de Valmont arrived at the château. When she had waited some minutes in the salon, listening to every sound, and moving uneasily from window to window, M. d'Yves came in, bowing, with his Panama hat in his hand. His wife would have the honour of attending madame instantly. In the mean while might he offer his services? Was there anything he could do? First of all, he begged that madame would sit down.

'It is not worth the trouble, monsieur,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'I have only a few words to say to Mme. d'Yves. I must apologise for such an early visit, but the affair is urgent.'

'And I cannot give you any assistance, madame?' said M. d'Yves.

'I suppose you have heard of the melancholy flight of Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire. Can you give me any news of her?'

M. d'Yves muttered an exclamation or two, shrugged his shoulders, and looked impenetrable.

'What news do you expect from me, madame? To be sure I have heard—so has the whole country, I suppose. Such things make a noise when they happen in good society.'

'I want to find out where the young lady is now. Can you give me no help, monsieur?'

'Help, madame! Nothing but conjecture. Let us see: can they

have reached England by this time? Or, perhaps, they might choose to go in some other direction. Poor Mme. de Saint-Hilaire! It must be a trial to her, but it will be a lesson never to trust the English.'

'The English are very good people,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'Such men as this are the exception.'

'C'est possible. You have driven from Lauron this morning, madame? May I venture to offer you breakfast? It will be ready in a few minutes.'

'Merci bien, monsieur. We must return at once. Perhaps I need not trouble Mme. d'Yves this morning,' said the Marquise, glancing impatiently at the door.

'Pardon. She will be here in a moment. If you would have the goodness to sit down.'

Mme. de Valmont was not unwilling to wait, for she had a sort of idea that Mme. d'Yves might have some information that her husband either did not know or did not choose to tell, and that it would be a pity to go away without trying all sources.

So she condescended to take one of the elegant little chairs, and to admire some handsome china which M. d'Yves brought forward for her inspection, little thinking how near she was to the object of her inquiries.

All this time M. de Valmont and Johnny were waiting in the little courtyard. They stood talking in the inner archway, which led into the garden, still gay and bright in autumn beauty.

Johnny was interested by the curious old gray mass of buildings, and walked a few steps forward into the garden to have a better view of them.

'They could hide twenty people in these queer old towers,' he said to M. de Valmont.

'All sorts of strange things happened here in the Revolution,' said the Marquis. 'There are rooms that one cannot discover from outside. Look, do you see that little loophole close to the corner of the wall, half hidden by the gateway? I wonder what sort of place gets the light through that. Wait for me here. I must speak to the coachman;' and he walked off, while Johnny lingered and looked up with curious eyes at the rugged walls and turrets that rose above him.

Suddenly a little white thing fell on the pavement at his feet, and he stooped instinctively to pick it up. It was a piece of paper, wrapped round a brooch that Marie often wore, with a few almost illegible words scribbled on it: 'Johnny, I am shut up here. I shall die. Come and let me out.'

'O, by Jove, what does this mean! What have those con-founded French beggars been doing to that little girl!' ejaculated Johnny. 'Now how am I to get at her?'

A moment's inspection of the neighbouring wall showed him a little narrow door in the recess between this turret and the next. He seized the iron ring that served as handle; the door was unlocked, and opened easily on the foot of a winding stone staircase. Up this Johnny sprang, turned into a twilight passage on the right, and found himself close to a door, of which the key was in the lock. He knocked, and there was a stifled cry inside. The handle was turned and shaken, and then came an eager voice—'Make haste, make haste, open the door!' Johnny wrenched the key round, and flung the door open. The next moment Marie was clinging to his arm.

'Where did you come from?'

O, I heard your voice, and another voice that I knew. Who was it? Did you come to look for me?'

'It was M. de Valmont,' said Johnny. 'Yes, we came to look for you. Mme. de Valmont is in the house with Mme. d'Yves.'

'Ah! then she has been telling lies, and saying that I am not here. That dear Mme. de Valmont! Where is she? Take me to her, Johnny.'

'Yes, you had better come to her at once,' said Johnny. 'You poor little thing, what have they been doing to you? Come along. Mind how you go down these horrid stairs. There, keep hold of me, and you will be all right.'

'Yes, yes,' said Marie, as they hurried down. 'But where is my grandmother? Have you seen her? Is she here?'

'No. Mme. de Valmont will take you home.'

Mme. d'Yves had not yet appeared in the salon, and Mme. de Valmont was getting a little tired of admiring the china, when she heard hurried uncertain steps coming up to the door.

Fortunately for M. le Baron's beautiful Sèvres, she had just had time to put down the cup she was holding, when Johnny and Marie dashed into the room together.

'Ah!' cried Mme. de Valmont.

She rose up suddenly, and held out her arms to the poor little prodigal, who ran into them without even seeing that there was any one else in the room. Johnny went quietly and looked out of the window. M. d'Yves pulled his moustache, stared from one to another, and muttered to himself. Another door opened, and Mme. d'Yves, elegantly dressed, and smiling, advanced into the room.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

MME. DE VALMONT disengaged herself gently from Marie's embrace, and made a low inclination to Mme. d'Yves, who returned it with one equally formal. Then there was a moment's silence, broken by Mme. d'Yves, who began in rather a weak voice.

'Tiens! Mademoiselle has changed her mind. I understood that she wished to hide herself. I beg your pardon, madame, for making you wait so long, but I was unavoidably detained. I am charmed to see you. Bon jour, monsieur,' with another curtsy to Johnny. 'It is monsieur votre fils, madame?'

'No, madame. It is a friend of mine. Will you have the goodness,' said Mme. de Valmont, turning to Johnny, 'to see if the carriage is there?'

Johnny bowed and left the room. M. d'Yves was standing in a corner, making faces. In obedience to a glance from his wife, he went out after Johnny. Marie stood half behind Mme. de Valmont, and Mme. d'Yves politely begged them to sit down.

'Merci, madame,' said the Marquise. 'My little affair has arranged itself, you see. I came to ask whether you could give me any tidings of Mdle. de Saint-Hilaire. Monsieur votre mari appeared quite unable to do so. You see I am satisfied, though at the same time very much astonished. Did you come to this house of your own free will, my dear Marie, or what is the meaning of it all?'

'Yes, madame, I did. I was very wrong, and I am very sorry,' answered Marie, in a low voice.

'Does mademoiselle intend to pursue her journey to Paris this evening?' asked Mme. d'Yves.

'If not, perhaps she will be good enough to write to M. Wyatt that she has changed her mind. I will not say that a letter will be quite equally welcome with herself, when ce monsieur meets us at Mont-Parnasse. But we will hope that he is a philosopher, and will receive it with resignation. What do you say, mademoiselle?'

'Allow me to answer for you, Marie,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'Mdle. de Saint-Hilaire is obliged for your hospitality, madame, and for the interest you take in her affairs. She has now, however, placed them in the hands of her own friends, who will arrange them as she wishes. She is responsible for her actions to no one but to madame sa grand'mère. Permit me also to remind you that kindness may sometimes be injudicious and misplaced, and that a person who allows herself to forward a flight of this kind is acting a part which must lower her position amongst honourable people.'

Mme. d'Yves's eyes flashed, but she was afraid of Mme. de Valmont, who on occasions could put on the dignity of an empress, and who as she stood there, tall, fair, and grave, was something like a beautiful reproving angel. It was indeed as if little Marie's ange gardien had suddenly swept down amongst the dark crew who had seized upon her, and taken her at once into safe shelter and care. Mme. d'Yves shrugged her shoulders and nodded her head expressively.

'Bien, madame,' said she. 'Mdle. de Saint-Hilaire is of course perfectly free to do as she pleases. At the same time she must allow me to say that when a thing is half done, the wisest course is generally to carry it through. She cannot think that she has improved her posi-

tion in the neighbourhood by this little adventure. M. Wyatt's disappointment is of course nothing in her eyes—though Heaven alone knows why she consented to run away with him, if she meant to turn back in the middle. But she should remember that an affair like this is not very soon forgotten—that former arrangements may not so easily be renewed, especially when a family has the pride of all the fiends—'

'Pardon, madame,' said Mme. de Valmont, flushing slightly. 'Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire's position in the neighbourhood will be taken care of by those on whom it chiefly depends. It is quite unnecessary for you to trouble yourself about it.'

'Madame, I am charmed to hear you say so. And I am not even to take a message to M. Wyatt, mademoiselle?'

'I shall write to him myself. I am much obliged to you, madame,' answered Marie.

She hardly knew what she was saying, and was only conscious of a wonderful rest and peace in Mme. de Valmont's protecting presence. She was going back to her grandmother, and at the present moment that was all she cared to think of. The fear, the excitement, the heavy load that lay on her poor little conscience, seemed suddenly to be taken away. The stinging words of Mme. d'Yves, which had called that colour to her friend's cheeks, made no impression on her ears. She only just knew that Johnny appeared at the door, followed by the footman, who announced that the carriage was ready; that there was a great exchange of curtsies with Mme. d'Yves; that Mme. de Valmont put her arm round her, and half carried her down-stairs.

'Good-morning, dear mademoiselle,' said M. de Valmont's cheer-

ful voice in the archway. 'What do you say to this?' he said to his wife. 'Johnny and I think that he shall hire a horse at the Faisan, and ride off at once to Rochemar, while we go straight to Les Sapinières.'

'Madame!' exclaimed Marie, looking up with a flushed face and tearful eyes. 'Why to Rochemar?'

'Ma très-chère, your grandmother is there. When we passed through Sonnay this morning we heard that she was gone.'

'Ah!'

'Yes, a very good plan,' said Mme. de Valmont to her husband. 'If there is a horse at the Faisan that will do.'

'We must ask. Johnny, get inside with the ladies. I am going on the box.'

'Thank you, monsieur,' answered Johnny; 'I am going to walk,' and he set off at once.

'Stop at the Faisan,' said M. de Valmont to the coachman.

The Hôtel du Faisan was a long white house with green shutters, standing on the northern side of the chief 'place' in the town. Opposite it was the quaint little market-hall, and all round were shops. Some carts were standing in the square, and people were moving backwards and forwards across the open space. From the church-tower behind the houses the bells were ringing, as M. de Valmont's carriage came up the nearest lane and stopped on the uneven pavement in front of the inn.

Marie leaned back in the carriage and hid her face, feeling as if all the passers-by must be looking at her. Neither she nor Mme. de Valmont spoke. Morin jumped down and went into the yard to ask about a riding-horse, and as they waited there a dog-cart came in at a fast pace

from the opposite side of the square, and its driver pulled up close to them. Little Marie in her exhausted state, with only one conscious feeling—the wish to see and be seen by no one—did not at first understand at all what was going on; but her kind guardian bent forward with a flushed and eager face, and M. de Valmont leaned from the box, stretching out his hand to Louis de Rochemar, who had sprung down at once and come forward hat in hand to the carriage. The few words that passed were in so low a tone that Marie did not hear them; but a movement of Mme. de Valmont's, as she nodded and smiled to her old acquaintance, roused her a little. She peeped at her face, and, puzzled by what she saw there, looked further and met Louis's eyes. Of course she knew him at once, and yet hardly realised who it was, looking at her so kindly, with so much sorrow and affection, and a sort of longing self-reproach. Mme. de Valmont watched the young man's face with incredulous pleasure. In spite of her dignified rebuke to Mme. d'Yves, she was not without a lurking fear that Marie might have destroyed all her prospects in life by this distracted adventure: however, if M. de Rochemar did not think so, no one else's opinion mattered much. Marie herself seemed to be in a dream, from which in another moment she partially waked, and blushing crimson all over her pale face, turned aside to hide it in the darkest corner. Just then Johnny came up, and Morin appeared from the stable-yard with discouraging news about horses. When M. de Valmont introduced Johnny to the Marquis de Rochemar the sailor bowed very gravely; but Louis held out his hand.

'You were going to Rochemar,

monsieur,' he said, 'in search of Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. Allow me to offer you a seat in my dog-cart. I am going back at once, and shall have great pleasure in driving you.'

'C'est ça,' said M. de Valmont. 'As for ourselves, we will make the best of our way to Les Sapinières. Listen, Johnny. Tell madame votre tante not to be anxious or to hurry herself. Mme. de Valmont will stay till she comes. In fact, we shall invite ourselves to breakfast.'

CHAPTER XXIV.

MAUDSLEY.

OF course every one knows that England as a country to live in is safe, dull, humdrum, matter-of-fact, and uninteresting. In an ordinary English existence it is very seldom that anything happens unexpectedly, while across the Channel there is an electric current of uncertainty always in the air. It is charged with revolutions. You never know when your house may be burnt down, or when you may have to pack up on five minutes' notice and fly for your life. There are all sorts of charming little excitements, too, in the course of one's daily affairs, which are impossible in a well-regulated English house, where everything and everybody goes on as if wound up by machinery. Still very strange and unexpected things do sometimes happen to people.

So Johnny Wyatt thought, as he stood at an open window one August morning, and looked out across a lawn with glowing flower-beds in the shade of some tall elms full of rooks' nests. Some letters were lying on the breakfast-table, directed to Captain Wyatt, most

of them invitations from people in the neighbourhood.

It was the old Maudsley dining-room, where Johnny had never intruded himself much in his uncle's time, but where he was now master and at home. The old man had been dead about eight months, and had made a new will in his last illness, not long after reading a paragraph in the papers headed, 'Distinguished Gallantry of a young Naval Officer.' Some disaffected natives, somewhere in the East, had contrived to get possession of a British gunboat, and had seized and imprisoned her crew, who would certainly have been murdered if a certain young lieutenant, with twenty men at his back, had not stormed the place, routed several hundred natives, and brought the boat and her crew back in triumph. It was that old-fashioned kind of courage which people call foolhardiness nowadays; if it succeeds it is lauded to the skies, if it fails it is well laughed at. It is seldom found in men who consider their lives things of much value. Johnny, as you know, had little of this instinct of self-preservation; and it was an adventure which just suited him, rather more dangerous than anything he had gone through before. He came off with honour and glory, and got his promotion on the spot. Also, on his uncle's death, not many weeks afterwards, it was found that this quiet old man, occupied as he was with his own sorrow, had been able to measure his two nephews rightly. Frank's legacy of 5000*l.* was not sweetened by a paragraph in the will which explained Mr. Wyatt's change of intentions regarding the two brothers. A report of Francis's adventures when abroad in the previous summer had reached his ears, he said, and had convinced him that his was not a character

to be trusted with large estates. He had therefore resolved to make John his heir; thus showing his respect for simplicity, unselfishness, and bravery.

So it came to pass that Johnny, thinner and darker and older-looking, stood in his own dining-room window, and stared at the rooks' nests, while Frank, his leave being long ago at an end, was gone to join his regiment in Canada.

'Good-morning,' said Agnes, coming into the room. Her brother turned from the window, and they sat down to breakfast. 'What a number of letters! and here is a French one for me. I thought the aunt was never going to write to me again.'

'Don't you want to read it? I'll do the coffee,' said Johnny. 'Most of those others are invitations from people who did not think me worth speaking to when I used to come here years ago. Mrs. Ashwood—do you remember her? I always used to think it would be the grandest day in my life if I could only get her to look at me when she shook hands. I used to look hard in her face, but she was always glancing on to the next person.'

'Yes; I hate people who do that,' said Agnes. 'But you will have attention enough now, never fear. After all, you were only a little middy in those days.'

'No; I was a lieutenant. She did it the last time I saw her, four years ago.'

'Did she?' said Agnes absently, already absorbed in the long closely-covered sheets of her French letter.

Johnny poured out the coffee, and then opened a newspaper.

'Hallo!' he cried out, after a few minutes.

'What is it?'

'Moreau & Company have come

to smash. That great ship-building firm at Brest.

'Well?' said Agnes vaguely.

Johnny glanced up under his long eyelashes with a slightly wondering smile. Was it possible that any one's memory could be so short!

'Did you never hear of them before?' he said patiently.

'Brest! Ah, to be sure; you went there with M. de Valmont. I had quite forgotten the people's name. Are they quite done for? What a pity!'

'You heard all about them at the time,' said Johnny. 'Don't you remember? M. de Valmont had a very large share in the concern; in fact I believe he was one of the partners. Good gracious!' and Johnny leaned his head on his hand with an air of immense depression.

Agnes looked sympathising, and hoped M. de Valmont was so rich in other ways that this would not make any serious difference to him. Then her eyes wandered back to her letter.

'Do you care to hear what my aunt says? There is something about them—'

'Go on.'

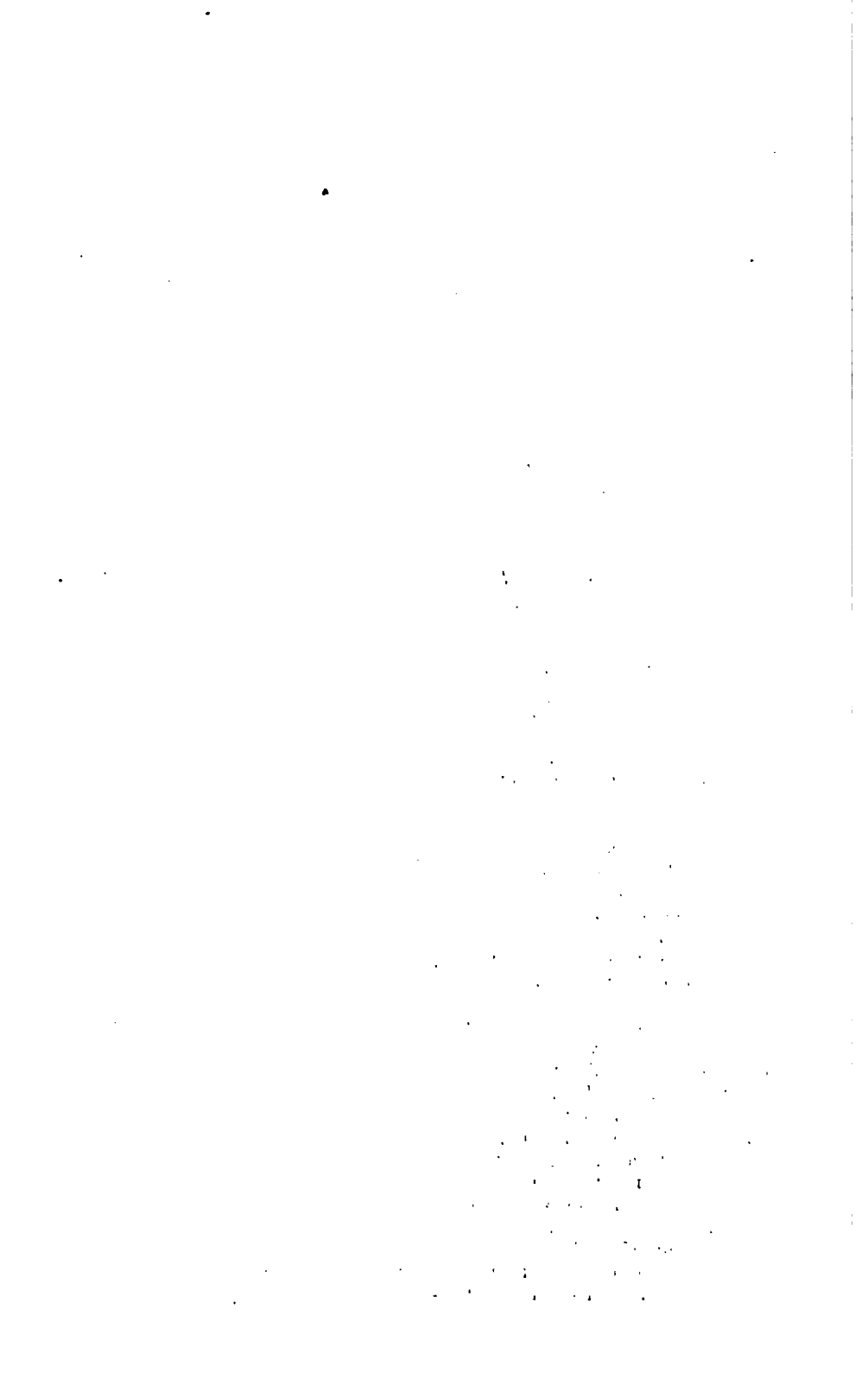
"I know you must have been glad, my dear Agnes," said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, after some affectionate sentences at the beginning, "to hear of Marie's happy marriage, and to know that my long anxiety about her has come to an end at last. I fear you must have thought during the last two years that both she and I have neglected you sadly. You heard of her illness, so long and so serious, that those who loved her were afraid her health and strength were entirely lost, and that her nerves could never recover the trial they had gone through. That she did recover at all was entirely owing to the generosity and tender-

ness of M. de Rochemar. You will understand what I mean by generosity. He never alluded to the past; but when the poor child was able to come down-stairs, he asked me to allow him to do what he could for himself. His success was as complete as it was deserved; and even in England, I assure you, you could not find two people who love each other more sincerely. Mme. de Rochemar and myself are very happy in the fulfilment of our wishes. I will now give you a little account of the wedding."

'Won't that keep?' Johnny suggested at this point. 'I thought you said there was something about the De Valmonts.'

'We shall come to that directly. I'll spare you the wedding itself—you can read it afterwards; but the reception at Rochemar must have been really lovely. My aunt went there to stay with Mme. de Rochemar, and there were a great many other people staying there; M. and Mme. de l'Allier—I remember them; don't you? My aunt says: "The people worked fifteen days preparing triumphal arches; and though Rochemar is such a little village, nothing could have been prettier or more perfectly done. Louis and Marie arrived at three o'clock in the afternoon, on a most beautiful day. They got out of their carriage at the first arch, where four little girls in white and wreaths of flowers presented each a tribute to the bride. One had a live partridge in a basket, representing the game of the country; the second had a basket containing a cream cheese and a pot of milk; the third a bunch of grapes and a small sheaf of wheat; and the fourth a large nosegay. The Maire and the Curé made speeches, to which Louis replied. There was a







PRESENTATION OF THE WEDDING-GIFTS.

See *THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.*

double line of National Guards of a hundred men each; and in the midst of all this I went, with Mme. de Rochemarand her friends, to meet the young couple. We then set off to walk to the château in procession: Louis and Marie first, then ourselves, the Maire, and the Curé, and then the soldiers following. At the entrance of the château there was another triumphal arch, where we took leave of the Garde. In the salon the young girls of the village were awaiting us to present their nosegay, and they made a very pretty speech. Then we dined, whilst a band played on the terrace; and all the village people sat down to an out-door feast. In the evening the whole of the avenue was illuminated, and there were banners flying in every direction. People came from Carillon and all the neighbouring villages; and we walked about till nearly midnight amongst constant cries of 'Vive Monsieur le Marquis!' 'Vive Madame la Marquise!' You will believe that I have seldom spent a more delightful evening. I thought several times of you, my dear Agnes, and wished you could see the charming scene. You always took an interest in our people, and their behaviour on this occasion would have convinced you of their kind, affectionate, and gentle nature. Marie has, of course, been received most cordially by the whole neighbourhood. She has one great grief, however—which is mine also—that we are likely very soon to lose our dear friends M. and Mme. de Valmont. I fear he has been getting into difficulties for some time past. Several of his speculations have failed, and now he is involved in the bankruptcy of some great ship-builders at Brest. They talked of selling Lauron, but I hope it is only to be let,

and that their circumstances may improve by and by. They will, at any rate, leave it in September, and go to Tours for a time, till they can arrange their further plans. Their son Max is married to Mdlle. de Pontmercy, and now lives in Paris. Pierre and Cécile are at present with their parents."

'Not married!' exclaimed Johnny, under his breath.

His sister paused and looked up.

'I need not read any more, for you won't listen to it,' she said. 'Not married, I suppose. But, dear Johnny, for pity's sake, don't let us have any more of those French entanglements. I am sure we had a lesson to keep out of them. And now that you are so well off, and could marry some charming English girl, who would make this a really happy home for you! Do consider. I daresay you would have no better success than you had before.'

Poor Agnes! In the history of mankind, is there an instance of the wisest sisterly counsels having any effect on a brother who was in love?

'Suppose you have some toast, and don't talk about it,' Johnny suggested.

He did not say a word about his intentions; but Agnes was painfully aware that all the invitations were declined, that the tidal-service in Bradshaw was being carefully studied, and that she might as well arrange to return home at her earliest convenience, leaving Maudsley in the care of the old housekeeper, who, with all her fellow-servants, already worshipped the Captain, as they called him.

CHAPTER XXV.

VESPERS AT LAURON.

I do not think it even occurred to Johnny to go respectably to his aunt's house, and from thence pay a correct visit to M. and Mme. de Valmont. As Lauron was his object, he found that the only natural course was to take the shortest way, to travel day and night till he got as near to it as the railway would bring him. This end of his journey was not Carillon, but a little town on the other side of the country—a small, clean, smart place—where he found a good inn for breakfast, and hired the master of the inn, his shaky wagonette, and old white horse, to take him on the three or four leagues to Lauron. M. Célestin did not find his passenger very communicative, and after some efforts at conversation took refuge in whistling and talking to his horse. It was impossible to be agreeable to a wooden-headed Anglais, who sat half asleep, with his head bent and his arms folded, and seemed to care for nothing, not even politics. It was Sunday, and as they approached Lauron the bells were ringing for vespers.

'Did monsieur wish to go to the château?' Célestin inquired. 'The family might very likely be at church. Not many more Sundays for them in their own old church.'

'They are going away soon, then?' said Johnny.

'Mais oui, monsieur. In fifteen days or so.'

Johnny woke and looked about him, as they crawled up the hill to the village in the broiling sun. There were the meadows, now burnt and brown; there was the river, and the well-remembered mill. On the other side were the heathy wilds, running away to the woods, where he used

to shoot with those jolly French sportsmen two years ago. What changes since then! He had been to the other side of the world; and it was a wonder that he had brought his life back with him. Little he had thought of ever wanting it for such a purpose as this. In that case he was not sure that the blacks would have been so welcome to it. A sudden glimpse through the trees and houses of the irregular street showed him the château, great and stately as of old, the August sun burning down on its high-peaked roofs and massive walls. All the trees and woods about it looked brown and shrivelled after the long hot summer. They were fading, like the fortunes of its owner. Johnny stopped his driver at a turn in the street where a narrow lane led up to the church, and asked him to wait at the inn a little further on till he heard of him again, which would be in an hour or two. He was not sure whether he should want to go back that day or not. In the mean time he left his portmanteau in Célestin's charge.

As he walked slowly and thoughtfully up the lane, he saw a barber's shop open on the other side of the road, and stood still and read the inscription on the sign, with a vague notion that his own locks would be the better for a little snipping. They grew more plentifully than ever, and would curl, though he did his best to brush them out straight. The legend was inviting: '*Ici on embellit la jeunesse. Ici on rajeunit la vieillesse.*' Johnny wavered for a few moments; but as he stood looking the church-bell stopped, and he resolved to go on at once to the church. What could an inch more or less of hair signify, when she was there? And who could tell that this would not be

his very last chance of seeing her? So this young sea-king, with his dark face and waving red-brown wig, went on up the lane to the churchyard, where groups of blue blouses were turning in under the rich archway of the Romanesque tower.

When Johnny followed them in, out of the blazing sunshine, he could at first see nothing but a confused crowd of white caps and blouses; but as his eyes got used to the dim light, he spied out the Marquis's seat by our Lady's altar, with the white statuette and the pretty light-blue covering, and in it two ladies in hats, and the dark close-cropped head of a young man. Johnny had taken the nearest chair to the door, and as he sat there, while the monotonous chanting of the vesper psalms went on, horrible misgivings began to crowd into his mind. After all, had he not been a great fool to come here without some more certain knowledge of the circumstances? It would be a most extraordinary thing, he now began to think, if two whole years had passed, and Mdlle. de Valmont was neither married nor engaged. Especially as, so long ago, there had been some idea of a good match for her. Johnny could not see that young man's face. He supposed it was Pierre. But if it should not be Pierre! and if, just from the stupidity of not making inquiries beforehand, he should only have come there to make a fool of himself! He was within an ace of getting up and leaving the church as quietly as he had entered it, but somehow he stayed where he was.

After the *Magnificat* he remained kneeling till some of the people were gone out, and raised his face just as the party from the château were passing. Mme. de

Valmont rustled gently by without seeing him, but he stood up and met Cécile face to face. She did not smile, but it was not the first time that he had seen that sudden flash of life and joy in her eyes. Pierre—for it was no one else—was looking another way and did not see him, neither did he hear the vesper thanksgiving that rose to his sister's lips as she crossed herself with the holy water: 'Nos qui vivimus, benedicimus Domino.'

Johnny followed them out slowly into the bright churchyard. One of his misgivings was gone already—that which would persist in reminding him, all through his journey, that the parting between Cécile and himself had not been such as quite to promise a happy meeting. The violets—and that curtsy of hers, which seemed to change their relations so entirely, and to put him in the position of a rather inferior acquaintance. But there were instincts underlying these recollections, which gave him confidence, though he did not himself know where it came from. Now he knew—I believe he had really known it all along—that Cécile was unchanged and unchangeable. 'We never forget,' she had said to him that wretched morning. And he was quite sure that if anybody else had a superior claim upon her, that look of frank and happy surprise would never have been given to him. He saw that she was speaking to her mother and brother, and heard one or two astonished exclamations. Then Pierre came hurrying back to meet him, while the ladies stopped and turned round at the foot of the churchyard steps. The village people looked on, while Johnny, with his hat in his hand, went forward to Mme. de Valmont, who was waiting for him

with an anxious flush upon her face. Johnny thought as she welcomed him to Lauron, speaking with a little unevenness in her voice, and looking at him almost wistfully, that in all his travels he had never seen a more charming-looking woman. She thought that her old friend had grown rather grave and conventional in manner. But Cécile knew that it was the same Johnny, only if possible more deeply in earnest, who took her hand and just raised his gray eyes half shyly to her face.

'You have been a long time paying us your promised visit,' said Mme. de Valmont, as they all walked away together towards the château. 'Do you know that you had very nearly lost your chance of seeing Lauron again?'

'Yes, madame; so I heard,' answered Johnny.

'I suppose you are come from Les Sapinières? We were there yesterday, but Mme. de Saint-Hilaire did not expect you. You took her by surprise.'

'I have not been there at all. I came across country to Vèze, and got a fellow with a wagonette to bring me on here. I hope M. de Valmont is well?'

'Very well, thank you. We shall find him at the château.'

'Maman,' said Cécile suddenly, 'I am going with Pierre to Nicole's; we shall overtake you presently.'

'And in the mean time,' said Mme. de Valmont, 'I shall hear all the wonderful adventures of M. le Capitaine. We have a great deal of respect for you now, monsieur. You are a hero. Yes; we saw you in the newspaper.'

'I am very sorry, madame,' said Johnny.

'He must tell his adventures over again to Pierre and me,' said Cécile.

'Pardon, mademoiselle!'

It was all just like old times; the gentle friendly teasing and quiet sincere compliments of the Marquise; her daughter's look of half-sympathising fun. Their misfortunes seemed to have no effect whatever upon these people, except perhaps on Pierre, who stood by silent and with a rather grave face—but he had never been demonstrative.

I am afraid an English sailor showed a great want of principle and patriotism to feel such relief in his escape from Englishwomen and all their angles to these graceful-mannered people, on whom no outward circumstances seemed to have any power, and who could smile and say pretty things in the depth of misfortune quite as naturally as when they were the leading ladies of the neighbourhood. Cécile and her brother turned into Nicole's yard, and Johnny walked on with Mme. de Valmont, into the pleasant shade of the avenue.

'You are not much changed,' she said, looking at him kindly. 'But do you know that I am very angry with you? How could you risk your life so foolishly?'

'It was not for nothing,' said Johnny. 'And my life would not have been much loss to any one if I had left it behind. But it seems determined to stay with me, though I am sure I don't know why.'

'You are a foolish child, and very ungrateful, if you do not believe that your life is valuable to any one. But I am very glad to see you again, just the same as ever. Why did you not write to say that you were coming?'

'I don't know, madame,' said Johnny. 'I thought I should go on to Les Sapinières, but I came first to see how you all were.'

This was not much of an ex-

planation, but Mme. de Valmont was wise enough to appear satisfied.

'We have had great changes since you were here,' she went on. 'You have perhaps heard that my son Max is married to Stéphanie de Pontmercy, the most charming girl in the world. We are all devoted to her. She has a good fortune, and they have an apartment in Paris, where they spend most of the year.'

'That must please M. de Pontmercy,' remarked Johnny. 'He was very fond of your son Max.'

'Yes,' said Mme. de Valmont, with a little sigh. 'Max was considered a good parti. And I suppose you will go to Rochemar to see your cousin Marie. That dear child has made a most suitable and happy marriage.'

'I was very glad to hear of that. If it had not come right, I don't think any of us could have ventured into this part of France again.'

'There was certainly no shadow of blame attaching to you, my dear Johnny,' said Mme de Valmont, with all her old kindness. 'On the contrary, it always pleases me to think that you and I between us brought the poor little thing back. Where is your brother now?'

'With his regiment in Canada,' said Johnny. He hesitated, and smiled a little. 'There was a great deal in his last letter about a young Canadian lady.'

'Well, I sincerely hope that he will make a satisfactory marriage and settle down at last,' said the Marquise.

She did not seem at all inclined to talk of her own family or their affairs, and made no further allusion to leaving Lauron. But her manner to Johnny was as kind as possible, and as they were getting near the château he thought he must seize the

present opportunity to ask his fate once more. If it was still the same, it would be no use to stay there and torture himself in sight of what was unattainable. Neither could he bear to go on to Les Sapinières. He would take Célestin and his carriage back to Vèze at once, and go home to England as fast as steam would take him. In the mean time he was far too much in earnest to use any polite circumlocutions, and bolted head foremost into his subject.

'Madame, I see that Mdlle. Cécile is not married yet. May I ask if she is engaged?'

'Well, no, she is not,' said Mme. de Valmont, with a little hesitation, and, grande dame as she was, colouring like a girl.

'I have not forgotten what you told me before,' said Johnny, 'about manifest impossibilities. But perhaps you know, madame—you may have heard—that I have got a great deal that I never expected or deserved; and though it is nothing for her, compared with what she might expect, forgive me for asking whether it is still so impossible.'

Johnny stopped short, feeling that he was making a dreadful mess of it, and that Mme. de Valmont was laughing at his awkward blunders.

'I suppose I am a fool for letting myself think of it,' he said rather sadly. 'I always was, and always shall be. Of course you have the same objections that you had before—a different country and all that. But please tell me at once, because, if you say no, I can run down the village and be off. I could not bear to see her again.'

'Wait a moment,' said Mme de Valmont, putting out her hand. For once she seemed to have a little difficulty in finding words

as Johnny stood before her, with earnest entreating eyes fixed on her face. 'You have told me something, and now I have something to tell you in my turn. And it is this—that for the last two years you have been the trouble of my life.'

'How, madame?' said Johnny, in a low voice.

'In this way. Cécile has had several excellent offers, all of which she refused without any good reason. As soon as any gentleman was proposed to her, the unfortunate man became the object of her strong dislike. Now I promised her once that she should choose for herself, and therefore, though you may be sure that I remonstrated, I could do nothing more. It was not till we heard of your heroic conduct last year that I discovered—though I had my suspicions before—who it was that stood in the way of all these gentlemen. So, you see, I have reason to be very angry with you. Now that you feel yourself justified in coming back to ask for her again, I can only say, speak to her yourself, like a brave Englishman, and, if she says yes, I can promise you that her father and I will not say no. After all,' Mme. de Valmont went on, smiling, with tears in her eyes, 'it will be only paying the debt she owes you.' Johnny kissed her hand without saying anything. 'Yes,' she said, 'you are both good, and you will be very happy.'

Johnny followed Mademoiselle de Valmont into the garden that afternoon, and found her gathering pink clusters of late roses in the shade of the old colombier. A very large hat shaded her fair hair and her pale face, which flushed a little as she heard a step approaching. She turned round and smiled a silent welcome.

'Mademoiselle,' said Johnny, in his slowest and gravest manner, 'don't you like violets better than roses?'

'I know *you* do not,' answered Cécile.

'Then I wonder why I have kept a dead one for two years,' said Johnny, holding out a square brown hand with a gray flattened violet lying in the palm. 'Yes, I must confess, I took it after you were gone. Will you forgive me?'

'I was very foolish. I must ask you to forgive me,' said Cécile gently.

'Then you have not forgotten it?'

'No.'

'You have thought of me sometimes? Your mother said I might come and tell you how I have always loved you with all my heart. Do you care for me enough to leave your country and all your people? Am I asking too much?'

Johnny Wyatt is not by any means universally admired, and many people since that day have wondered how in the world he managed to gain the affection of this young French lady, with her beauty, refinement, and nobility. They were not there in the old château garden when the dead violet lay between two clasped hands, and Cécile told her English lover, perhaps not exactly in words, that he could not ask too much, for life had long ceased to be life, without him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A LITTLE MARQUISE.

ONCE more a full moon was shining on the Château des Sapinières, such a moon as shone there when Johnny saw it first.

He reminded his aunt that it was exactly two years from that day. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire smiled, and answered him kindly, but yet sighed a little, for it seemed to her that she had struggled through a good deal of trouble to the fulfilment of the plans of that day.

Marie's first engagement and its consequences were not very pleasant recollections, however well things might have arranged themselves since. But she was obliged to forget past trouble in sympathy with the happy party who came to dine with her that night.

All the rooms were lighted up, and doors and windows stood open on the terrace, where the younger people sat and wandered about in the moonlight. In the salon the Comtesse entertained her elder guests, M. and Mme. de Valmont and Mme. de Rochemar. Peloton, after bestowing all kinds of endearments on the younger Marquise, had finally established himself on the end of her train, as she sat in a low chair on the terrace. She and Cécile had a long talk here together, before Louis, Pierre, and Johnny came out of the library, where they had been playing billiards. Then they all laughed and chatted together. The sound of their merry voices came in at the salon windows, where Mme. de Valmont was telling her friends some interesting news.

'Ma chère,' cried Mme. de Rochemar ecstatically, 'I never heard anything that delighted me more. Then we are not going to lose you, after all. Let me go and tell Louis at once.'

'Wait a little,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'He will not be long without knowing. Cécile has told Marie, and now Johnny is there, and it cannot be so well talked of in his presence. It is all his

doing—is it not, mon ami?' she added, turning to her husband.

'Certainly,' said M. de Valmont. 'He has advanced the money to help us through the present difficulty. He spoke first to Pierre, and then came to me and offered it, in the most generous manner. He has behaved throughout like a gentleman. I may confess to you, mesdames, that I am proud of my future son-in-law.'

'I am very happy,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, 'to be connected with the families of both my best friends.'

While the party in the salon were thus congratulating themselves and each other, Marie got up, rousing Peloton from his resting-place, and tapped Johnny on the arm with her fan.

'Let us take a little walk,' she said. 'I want to speak to you.'

'I shall be charmed,' said Johnny.

'Mon petit Louis, you and M. Pierre must entertain Cécile, and not let her run after us. Come along, Johnny. You and I have our little secrets that nobody else must hear.'

She made him come down the steps, and they walked slowly along together towards the tourelles and the avenue. For the first minute or two she was silent, and an owl flew across among the trees with a melancholy hoot, almost close to them.

'Listen to the chouettes,' said Marie. 'They always make me shiver.'

'It is a horrid noise,' said Johnny. 'Well, madame, what have you to say to me?'

He thought Marie was even smaller and paler than she used to be, and that her appearance was not improved by the rather magnificent style of dress which she

had adopted to please her mother-in-law. But she certainly seemed much more uniformly happy than in the old days; there was a sort of careless content in her manner, the peevishness was gone, and to her husband and his mother she was always affectionate and gentle. She did very well as a great lady, and yet Johnny wondered how any one could compare her for an instant to Mdlle. de Valmont in her plain white muslin gown.

'I have given you all my congratulations,' said Marie, opening and shutting her fan as she walked. 'I am not going to praise Cécile. You know that I think her perfect, and hate you very much for taking her away. However, as they are to stay at Lauron, I suppose you will be often there; and you must come to us at Rochemar. I want to know—have you heard from your brother lately?'

'I had a letter this morning, forwarded from home. I was telling your grandmother all about him. He is going to be married.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes. To a Canadian lady, a Miss Terry. She is very pretty and very poor. Frank says they will have at first something of a struggle. I can't say that I envy the young lady,' Johnny added, after a moment's pause.

'I don't know that you need say that,' said Marie. 'If she loves him enough, they will do very well. I was going to tell you that he wrote to me not long ago, a very nice kind letter. He knew afterwards, just as I did, that what we did once was very foolish as well as very wrong. We did not really understand each other—we should never have been happy. I know now that I should have been very wretched.

Poor Frank! I shall write to congratulate him now in my turn.'

'What will M. de Rochemar say?'

'What are you thinking of? He saw Frank's letter, and will see this. Johnny, remember that you and your wife must know each other's thoughts if you are to be happy. Louis and I understand each other perfectly.'

'I will not forget your advice, madame,' said Johnny, with a grave little smile.

'I mean to have Agnes to stay with me one of these days, if she will forget all the trouble I gave her,' said Marie, as they returned towards the terrace.

M. de Rochemar came down the steps to meet them with a white shawl on his arm.

'It is not so warm now, ma petite. You must put this on. My mother thinks the air is fresh enough to shrivel up her flower.'

'Merci, mon ami,' said Marie gently, submitting to be wrapped up. 'It is a poor pinched little flower at its best.'

'Are you there, my children?' cried Mme. de Rochemar, appearing at the door.

Marie took her husband's arm and went to her: there they stood talking together in low tones, in the broad light that streamed out on the terrace.

Pierre walked off to play with Peloton, and Johnny and Cécile lingered at the top of the steps.

'Do you know what happened this day two years?' said Cécile.

'Certainly,' said Johnny. 'I met two ladies going into that old church at Le Mans. And do you know what I said to myself when I saw them?'

'No, indeed, Johnny. What was it?'

'Here she is.'

FIFTY YEARS A CRICKETER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE CRICKET-FIELD.'

IV. THE OLD KENT ELEVEN.

AMIDST all the recollections of myself and of my cotemporaries, no cricket matches hold a more prominent place than the glorious contests of the old Kent Eleven, and the annual fixtures of 'Kent against England,' which continued to be the great match of the season for twenty years, from 1834 to 1854; and I think all true cricketers will admit that the achievements of the county of Kent deserve a distinct record for the spirited endeavour of Lord Harris to bring together all the talent of his county, and once more to give Kent its old-time superiority as second to none as a cricketing county of all the counties of England.

Kent has as fair a title to be regarded as *cunabula Romæ*, the cradle of cricket, as any other county. Hampshire has too often been pronounced to be the earliest county that showed any excellence in our national game; but Kent may justly claim to share the honour with Hants. Kent was the earliest antagonist of Hants, and the earliest county that played single-handed against All England; and much betting would appear to be customary at this great match, for, as early as the year 1748, the Law Reports contain an account of an action brought in the Court of King's Bench to recover two bets of twenty pounds each—a very large sum in those days—laid on a match of cricket, which had

been played by the County of Kent against All England. The question raised was, whether cricket was a game within the meaning of the words of the statute, 'or any other game or games whatever,' by the 9th of Anne. The court held 'that cricket was a game, and a very manly game too, not bad in itself, but only in the ill use made of it by betting more than ten pounds on it; but that was bad and against law.'

An exciting match of Kent against England was also, in 1770, made the subject of a mock heroic poem, written by one James Love, comedian. The heart-stirring crisis of the match is thus described:

'To end th' immortal honours of the day,
The chiefs of Kent once more their
might array:
No trifling toil e'en yet remains un-
tried,
Nor mean the numbers on the adverse
side.
With double skill each dangerous ball
they shun,
Strike with observing eye, with caution
run.
At length they know the wish'd-for
number near,
Yet wildly pant and almost know they
fear:
The two last champions even now are in,
And but three notches now remain to
win,
When, almost ready to recant its boast,
Ambitious Kent within an ace had lost.
The mounting ball, again obliquely
driven,
Cuts the pure ether, soaring up to
heaven.
Wallock was ready—Wallock, all must
own,
As sure a swain to catch as e'er was
known;
But whether Jove and all-compelling
Fate
In their high will resolved that Kent
should beat,

Or the lamented youth too much relied
On sure success and Fortune often tried,
The erring ball, amazing to be told,
Slipp'd through his outstretch'd hand,
and mock'd his hold!

And now the sons of Kent complete the
game,
And firmly fix their everlasting fame.'

Kent held its high position as a fair rival for All England, without men given, till the year 1789, by which time, by the formation of the Marylebone Club, Middlesex had become powerful, as also had the counties of Surrey and Sussex; so Kent was obliged to be reconciled to no higher honour than that of competing in ordinary county matches.

But, in the year 1834, it was observed that in every great match the Marylebone Club drew their foremost men from Kent. So Kent, after measuring its strength with Sussex, the land of Broadbridge and of Lillywhite, once more aspired to the honour of playing England single-handed, and thenceforth 'Kent against England' formed part of the season's programme for the lovers of cricket.

In this year, 1834, Mynn, Felix, and Wenman, who were the main supports of Kent during the whole of the series of All-England matches, headed the eleven. They were assisted by Mr. Harenc, who was then the first gentleman bowler, second only to Lillywhite, and also by Mr. Herbert Jenner, as fine a wicket-keeper as ever appeared at Lord's. 'I bowl the best ball of any man in England,' said old Lillywhite, 'and Mr. Harenc the next best.'

Alfred Mynn, though not so much to be depended on at that time, with Mills, did the rest of the bowling; but then Pilch always played against Kent, not being then naturalised in Kent, though afterwards he received an annual retainer from the county,

and was engaged at Canterbury to instruct the club, and was quite the father of the Eleven. Mr. Fagge, who played often in the name of Fredericks, showed by far the best form of batting in my day at Oxford. I remember well when he was practising against pelting for bowling on Cowley Marsh, for the first county match, his college having given him permission to go to Lord's for this great occasion, on which too he played a fine innings. Mr. Knatchbull also played. He was a celebrated Wykehamist and a dashing field. However, Kent did not win. Cobbett and Lillywhite as bowlers, backed up by Pilch and Marsden, on the side of England—and the said spinning bowlers, be it remembered, powerfully aided by the rough state of Lord's ground—were quite enough then to account for Kent's defeat.

Next year, in 1835, Hillyer and Clifford joined the Kent Eleven, and Kent, though beat in one innings in the first match, returned the compliment in the second by winning in one innings also.

In 1836, Pilch still played against Kent, and the match ended as a drawn game, but much in favour of Kent, and the next two seasons, that is in 1837 and 1838, no Kent and England match was played; for Alfred Mynn's illness, to which we shall presently refer, would have deprived Kent of his powerful assistance.

In this year the Marylebone Club made a Kent and England match at Town Malling for Pilch's benefit, and Kent won after a most exciting contest by only two runs. Kent also won the return match this year by three wickets. It was in this match that Redgate—than whom no man more frequently took Pilch's wicket—bowled Pilch,

Alfred Mynn, and Stearman in one over! and, said an eye-witness, he drank a glass of brandy (I hope not a large one) between each wicket as it fell.

Fuller Pilch, Dorrington, and Tom Adams had joined at length the Kent Eleven — good men all. Mr. Haygarth remarks that at this time there was a remarkable number of good bowlers, gentlemen and professionals; never so many at the same time. These comprised Sir Frederic Bathurst, Messrs. Alfred Mynn, Charles Taylor, Harenc, Sayres, Whittaker, Kirwan, and Craven; and as professionals, Lillywhite, James Dean, Hillyer, Cobbett, Redgate, Clarke, James Taylor, Fenner of Cambridge, T. Barker of Nottingham, George Pickwell of Sussex, Tom Adams, Hodson, Martingell, Good, and Bayley. The reason there have been so few good bowlers lately is that the spin and devilry of the bowling is spoilt by overwork; our bowlers play too many matches, with exhausting school engagements before the season opens; and some belong to All-England travelling elevens, and the like. In this way our bowlers are spoilt and used up. Fine bowling requires a delicacy of hand and free, fresh, and lively wrist. This natural movement of the hand is soon replaced by a mechanical jerk of the shoulder and by a twist and wriggle of the whole body, and, worst of all now, by a high hand and a pelting action, with which style such balls as Hillyer's are quite impossible.

In 1840, Kent, at Lord's, lost by 76 runs; but E. Wenman, their captain, wicket-keeper, and almost their best batsman, was ill, and unable to play.

'This,' said Felix, 'was uncertain to the last; and then, I am sorry to say, I saw a certain noble

lord, and another who should have had a nobler spirit, walk down to the gate at Lord's and obtain the earliest information, and then remark, "As Wenman is not playing, and that makes all the difference too, we can now afford to back England. We need say nothing about what we know of Kent's loss." I have lived always a poor man, but I never condescended to such tricks as that.'

It was in this match that Tom Adams hit a ball to the top of the tennis-court, and made a hole in the tiles which long remained unrepaired, a visible record of the hit.

In 1841, Kent won the first match by two wickets, though Felix did not play. In this match Wenman stumped three men, and one of them he stumped off Mynn's swift bowling—happy for Kent that Mynn had any wicket-keeper to do him justice. It was in this year first that Martingell joined the Kent side—a fine field, fair bat, and very useful bowler of a medium pace.

In the return match of this year Felix was again absent; still Kent beat All England in one innings.

These Kent and England matches continued more frequently in favour of Kent, to 1853, but their last victory was in 1849, though Kent probably would have beaten England in 1851, for in that year one game was drawn decidedly in their favour. After the year 1854 Kent never was matched against England even-handed till 1862. It is evident that the strength of the county depended on some five men—a host in themselves; and with the youth and strength of these men, the glory of Kent and the proud boast of one county standing against All England departed too.

The men to whom I allude were

Mr. Alfred Mynn, who played thirty-two out of the thirty-three games which, 'out and home,' were played from 1834 to 1854. Chiefly owing to Mynn's injury at Leicester, and the long illness which followed, there was no Kent match in 1837 and 1838, nor did Kent record a victory up to that time. They had too many amateurs, and that in a day when gentlemen had no school or college professionals, and did not practise as earnestly as of later years. Messrs. Harenc, whose bowling had declined, Fagge, Knatchbull, and Norman were good men all, but not quite up to the mark of All-England men. But in 1839 and 1840, Thomas Adams, Dorrington, Fuller Pilch, and Martingell added a power of strength indeed; and these, with Mr. Walter Mynn, Hillyer, and Wenman, for ten years—from 1839 to 1849—played about even with All England, winning nine matches and losing ten; Martin and Hinkly coming in as useful recruits in 1845 and 1848 respectively.

Mr. Herbert Jenner played the earlier matches; and Mr. Emilius Bayley in 1842-4; and Mr. C. de Baker played occasionally during the whole series, from 1841; and Mr. Whittaker for five years.

Pilch and Martingell were not native players, but naturalised only by professional engagements; but other counties had similar advantages. Felix, like Martingell, was Surrey born; but Felix kept his school for years at Blackheath, a denizen of Kent.

To continue my recollections of these Kent and All-England matches after 1841. In 1842 the first match was played on the Beverley Ground, Canterbury. Fuller Pilch came out with a grand score of 98, and Felix kept him company for 74, against eight

bowlers: Lillywhite, Dean, Barker, Hawkins, Fennex, Good, Butler, and Sewell. These I may well enumerate, to show how strong was the All-England Eleven at that time. The whole score of the first innings was 278; and this was long odds in favour of the side that scored so many in those days, yet England scored only 12 less; and Lillywhite, getting seven wickets, put the Kent Eleven out for only 44 in the second innings, and All England won by ten wickets. In this match Guy made 80 for All England; and with one forward drive, for which he was famous, he made seven runs, without any over-throw.

In 1845, old Lillywhite, though fifty-three years of age, scored 30 and 7. The byes—14 and 15 lost by England, and 10 and 12 by Kent—seem in these days too many for good fielding, but we must remember the fast bowling and the state of the ground before heavy rollers were known. But on any ground, for byes and leg-byes, five per cent on the whole score is fair fielding.

In 1846, at Lord's, the match was a very exciting one: England won by one wicket. Lillywhite, then fifty-four years of age, bowled beautifully, and got ten wickets, though Martingell, Dean, and Clarke took the other end, always the Pavilion end; for old Lilly always said, 'I shall have the lower wicket, and after that you can have which you please.'

This gave him both the slope of the ground and, usually, the summer breeze at his back. But this slope was too much for the great natural twist of Clarke's slows, so Clarke preferred to twist against the hill from the other end.

In the return match at Canterbury, Kent, with an innings of

only 94, won in one innings, though Alfred Mynn, their great bowler, was unable to play—the only occasion on which he failed to appear for Kent. In the Gravesend and Essex match, a week before, he and Box had come into painful collision while rushing for the same ball, and both were too much hurt to play in the match.

In 1847, at the match at Canterbury, Felix caught out seven at point, at which place he was an excellent field. Dorrington was almost as good at cover as Hillyer was at short-stop, so the Kent fielding was very strong. When Wenman was absent, Dorrington kept wicket. Tom Adams was capital at long-leg, and Martingell good anywhere.

By the year 1848 the best players were growing old. Fuller Pilch was forty-eight, and Wenman and Felix forty-five years of age. Great then was the value of a new colt like Hinkly, who got sixteen wickets in one match, and all in the second innings, though Hillyer and A. Mynn took the other end. Still England won. Age had begun to tell, and England, after the railway system had been so long developed, drew good men together from north and south, east and west, to take away the last chance of Kent any longer standing against England. William Clarke now appeared on England's side. 'Against Clarke's bowling all the best players,' says Mr. Denison, '*muffed* their play. Pilch scored only 2 and 13, Dorrington 11 and 6, A. Mynn 1 and 4, Wenman 2 and 0, and Hillyer 2 and 6.' In the return match, however, the scores were small, and Kent won without any help from Hinkly's bowling.

Mr. Haygarth relates that the match was won by Mynn hitting

the ball to Parr, who, instead of throwing it up, ran off and pocketed it as the perquisite of the man who last handled the ball. This caused an alteration in the custom; the ball was henceforth ordered to be given to the umpires, and thus an unseemly scramble for the ball after the game hit was obviated for the future.

In 1849, Kent played without either Wenman or Dorrington, and Clifford, not so good a performer, was chosen as wicket-keeper. In this match Lillywhite greatly distinguished himself: he was then fifty-seven years of age, yet he clean bowled five in the first innings; Wisden and Clarke bowled at the other end, but neither of them did by any means as much to win the match. Wisden and Clarke, however, being now in full force, usually made England very strong. As to Lillywhite, whoever wishes to judge correctly of his powers must remember that up to this late age no man did more with the ball. Whatever bowlers took the other end, Lillywhite almost always had his share of bowled or caught, and many clean bowled; he almost despised catching men out: he liked to dig them out, and send the stump-bails flying. What if they had seen him, with all the freshness of his spin and abrupt rise which characterised his bowling, in his earlier days in Sussex!

In 1850, at Canterbury, though Fuller Pilch was fifty, he scored 29 and 51; when Wenman at forty-seven scored 30 and 29 for Kent: but Kent lost by fifteen runs.

In 1851, at Cranbrook in Kent, in consequence of rain, the match was drawn, but decidedly in favour of Kent. This was one of the All-England matches got up

by Clarke, and at a time that Daniel Day was second to no bowler of the day, at least under Clarke's guidance. 'Be sure, Day, while you bowl for me,' said the old one, 'that you never let any man go on playing you back. Pitch well up, and drive them on to forward play, and I will set the field to suit you. The worst ball you can bowl is a short-pitched one.' 'Clarke and Day,' said Mr. Haygarth, 'bowed 128 balls to Pilch and Wenman without a run.' I give this on his good authority; if true, it beats all the feats ever heard of with the ball.

In 1851, Kent had lost for ever Dorrington and Martin; though Wilsher had commenced his career; but by this time Grundy had joined England, which registered a victory by four wickets.

After 1851, A. Mynn's bowling failed, he had grown very heavy (about twenty stone), and in 1853 Kent had the humiliation of following—*Solve senescentem*—their innings. Adams was aged forty, Pilch fifty-three, Wenman forty-eight, A. Mynn forty-seven, and Hillyer forty. The glory of Kent had departed. The extent to which Kent depended on one limited set of famous players may be judged from this—that, out of the thirty-three matches played between Kent and England at Lord's and in the county,

A. Mynn played . . .	32
Hillyer " . . .	32
Adams " . . .	25
Wenman " . . .	23
Felix " . . .	20
Martingell " . . .	20
Dorrington " . . .	17
W. Mynn " . . .	16

These men were all playing together between 1839 and 1849, during which time Kent could hold her own with England, winning, as I said, nine matches to the ten won by England.

Hillyer was indeed a great acquisition. Kent having small choice of bowlers had now found a first-rate man in Hillyer to divide the work with Alfred Mynn. We must distinguish this great bowler as Alfred, because his brother Walter was also a valuable aid to the Kent Eleven. Mr. W. Mynn I heard say that Hillyer bowled in the most difficult style of any man of his day. If Lillywhite was rather more accurate, Hillyer's bowling was very fair, being as much lower than that of most others as Lillywhite's was higher. His delivery had, as a natural result, all the more spin. Spin and abrupt rise and shooters therefore characterised Hillyer's, as also Cobbett's bowling; Hillyer and Cobbett having the lowest and the most easy and graceful delivery of any men in my remembrance. Hillyer's bowling had also this great advantage, that it was faster than the average, while at the same time, which is very rare, the pace did not annihilate the bias of the ball. The ball, after pitching to the leg, would often cut right across the wicket, almost like Mr. Buchanan's; and this twist on a fast ball gives many a catch to the slips.

As to the slip required for Hillyer, the pity was he could not act two parts at the same time, for Hillyer was the best short-slip ever known—a capacity which he had many opportunities of displaying against Mr. A. Mynn's terrific bowling. Indeed it was most fortunate for the Kent Eleven that they had a man to do full justice to Mynn's fast bowling as slip as well as in wicket-keeping. The catches Mynn caused to the slips would have been lost with many other men than Hillyer.

Next to Hillyer, as to the difficulty of his bowling, of no man have I ever heard so much praise

as Buttress of Cambridge. 'Buttress,' said Fred Miller, 'could almost make the ball speak. I played him one match, and by him only I won for the United against the Parr's All-England Eleven. I offered Buttress five pounds if we won; but I had to commit him to the care of Caffyn to insure his remaining quite sober enough to bowl during the match.'

I well remember Buttress's bowling in that match as excellent indeed—the pace was rather slow, but the bias and the dodge very remarkable. William Hillyer played for Kent from 1835 to 1855. In the last season he fell and broke his thumb, and afterwards ceased to play, but commonly stood umpire in great matches, and died, like not a few professionals, of consumption in 1861. The Messrs. Mynn and Wilsher followed him to the grave.

William Martingell was the youngest of the Kent Eleven, being under twenty years of age when he first joined it. Still Parr played for All England at seventeen, and Mr. W. G. Grace as early; and I think I may add Daft to the list of young All-England men. Old Martingell, William's father, had been an old-fashioned bowler, who, like Fenner and some others of the old ones, gave such spin to a fast underhand ball as would grind the fingers against the bat. William Clarke's balls would also punish those who despised 'the slows' in the same way, and Clarke used to boast that he sent men back to the pavilion for their gloves to save their fingers.

W. Martingell made himself first known as a Surrey player, but being engaged under Fuller Pilch on the Kent ground he made rapid progress, and, though not quite a first-class bowler, he

was useful at the wicket almost in every match he played. His batting and fielding were both good, and he was one of the few good all-rounders. He was chosen by Clarke for his All-England Eleven. Such a player must undoubtedly have been valuable to Kent. Like some others I am happy to name of the professionals of that day, William Martingell was not only popular generally, but he was one of the humble friends of not a few of the gentlemen and patrons of the game. After a good engagement with Lord Ducie at Woodchester Park in Gloucestershire, he has ended with being a successful tutor to the Etonian Eleven.

Edward Wenman played for Kent twenty years, and had turned fifty-four before he retired. He was a very powerful man, of fifteen stone, and six feet in height, and well built. He was by trade a wheelwright and carpenter, at Benenden, in Kent. The Benenden Cricket Club was long celebrated, and supplied not a few players to the County Eleven. At Benenden, Wenman still lives, and is greeted with the greatest respect and friendship whenever he makes his appearance on a cricket ground. Wenman was valuable to his county as a captain and manager of a match second to none of his day; also, as nearly the best bat of his day; and Dean thinks he was equal to Lockyer or to any one he has ever seen as a wicket-keeper. 'His left hand was so very good,' said Dean; 'and you know, sir, a wicket-keeper gets very few chances if he can only stump with his right.'

Wenman's play was not with a long reach forward like Pilch, but more like Parr's style and that of the modern school. Wisden said Wenman's back play was the best

he had seen; and when once I saw him play Redgate's many shooters on Lord's, which then was hard like baked clay and as rough as the road, I thought him the most efficient man in a difficulty I had ever seen; though to Carpenter I have reason to award equal praise for the same style of play and play under difficulties.

Richard Mills was a great support to the Kent Eleven in its early days. I played with him as one of the Left hands against the Right at Lord's in 1838. He was a fair bat, very hard hitter, like most left-handed men, and one of the best bowlers of his day. He was one of the recruits from the Benenden Club. In 1834, Mills, with only Edward Wenman, played a strange match: those two against an eleven, and they won easily. His, Mills's bowling, however, was less required when Hillier joined; and Mills did not play with them after 1840. He was then forty-two years of age. He retired before the more glorious days of Kent.

John Gude Wenman was cousin of Edward Wenman: he was a fine left-handed bat, and capital field at long-slip or cover-point. He only played five matches out of the thirty-three.

Mr. Emilius Bayley, the same who scored 152 in the school match of Eton against Harrow at Lord's, played three matches with his county. He was worth playing for his batting, but he was better still in the field, either at long-leg or cover-point. So the Kentish field was strong at all points—though most of the men were rather sure and steady than quick, being past the age of great activity. Thirty is the extreme limit of quick fielding. The best fielding ever seen is in the Oxford and Cambridge matches, at least as regards quick fielding. Pro-

fessionals, from their unintermitting practice, are generally more sure and safe at a catch, but they are too mechanical, and rarely move till the ball is hit, and therefore cannot cover as much ground, and are rarely as good runners in the field, as gentlemen; as to running between wickets, the gentlemen generally beat the players by twenty per cent at least.

Edward Martin joined the Kent Eleven in 1845, and played with them till 1852, eight seasons. Though not young, being thirty-four years of age when he joined, he was accounted a most excellent field, especially at long-leg, and he was a free hard hitter. He once kept a cricketer's shop at Oxford, and there he secured the friendship of a wealthy collegian, who set him up in a farm at Leominster; after which Martin's history is one of those remarkable ones which every now and then tend to show that fact may be stranger than fiction.

Martin had kept on his Oxford shop while attempting to attend to his farm on the borders of Wales. Finding the two incompatible, he sold his stock, and with several hundred pounds of the proceeds in his pocket, he one morning left Worcester on a favourite horse. This was in the year 1849, and from that day to 1869—twenty years—nothing more was ever heard of him. But in November of that year a man fell from his horse and was killed, at Barcombe, near Lewes; and Martin's relatives were astounded by the news that he whom they had long lamented as probably robbed and murdered had lived unknown so many years, and might then be seen a corpse at the Royal Oak Inn of Barcombe. His papers had disclosed the address of his friends.

Edmund Hinkly was also one

of the Benenden recruits, a left-handed bowler as well as bat. His bowling for the last five seasons of the Kent and England matches was valuable indeed as a refresher to the failing powers of Kent; for Alfred Mynn was now past his best, and Hillyer wanted more assistance against the powerful bats of England than could be found in Martingell alone, whose bowling was not quite accurate enough for first-rate hitters, and never very difficult; but Hinkly's bowling was ripping indeed. He was rarely opposed to George Parr without getting his wicket. He bowled fast round-arm with much ease to himself—a good delivery with a break from the leg which was very destructive. Once, at Lord's, he took seven of the wickets of England in the first innings, and all in the second, though Hillyer bowled all the time—one of the most remarkable feats in the history of cricket. Hinkly honestly belonged to Kent, though his name will be found sometimes on the side of Surrey, because he once resided near the Oval.

Tom Adams is a name that heads, I think, every score of the Kent Eleven for twenty-five matches. In every match Adams went in first. As a severe and slashing hitter, he had thus the advantage of such loose balls as come before the bowlers have settled down to their work, and also, since free-hitting means guess-hitting, he could more easily guess the rise of the ball before the spikes had cut up the ground and made the spin of a Cobbett or a Redgate more effective still. With the bat he did his full share; his average was from 10 to 12 an innings; but his fielding was first-rate, and he was a very useful change bowler. He bowled on the left, and, consequently, over the wicket—a style that renders 'leg before wicket' easy to decide, though of proportionably rare occurrence, but at the same time the light is often obstructed and the player balked by the umpire; though the bowler loses the advantage of some of his bias and of a spin across the wicket.

(To be continued.)

THE STABLE SIDE OF MAYFAIR.

THE brilliancy of the spectacle presented by Rotten-row at the height of the season can scarcely be said to be due entirely to the assembling at that particular spot of the most charming and popular representatives of beauty, rank, and fashion. The jewel of itself may be perfection; but no one will deny that its splendour is immeasurably enhanced by the art of the goldsmith. The 'setting' is the great thing; and just as diamonds and sapphires are under obligations to the jeweller, so are beauty and fashion, when, separately or combined, they condescend to gladden the hearts and gratify the eyes of ordinary mortals by appearing in public, beholden to the coachmaker, the horse-dealer, and the manufacturer of servants' liveries. If coachmaking were an art unknown, and there were no horses, the 'Ladies' Mile' would be shorn of much of its magnificence. Sedans might make a pretty show, and chairmen be arrayed even so as to eclipse our Jeames and Chawles; but the bravery of the show would inevitably fall far short of that which we are accustomed to. The stately barouche, the elegant landau, the cosy brougham, the smart phaeton, each with its appropriate equine appointments, not to mention the superbly mounted horsewomen and horsemen, are all requisite to make perfect the present pleasing programme. Nor, bearing in mind the importance in every public display of upholstery and ornamentation, must the gay coachman on his driving-seat be forgotten; or the gorgeous liverymen, who serenely contem-

plate admiring spectators, from their post of honour, the monkey-board. They are part and parcel of the attractive 'turn-out.' Their coats are coloured in accordance with the hue of the cloth of which the carriage trimming is composed, and the silk incasement of their mighty calves matches to a shade the broad lace on the hammercloth and the picking out of the wheels and panels. There are a very large number of them. Reckoned all round, coachmen periwigged and plain, footmen in mufti and full-blown, pages youthful and adult, it is estimated that they would average two to each vehicle in the 'Row,' and of the latter may be counted any special day from two to three thousand. What becomes of these minor actors in the pageant, these 'supers' of the stage, when the play is over and the company dispersed? Mayfair, the nearest fashionable stronghold, requires the services, say, of a third of this outdoor servant army of six thousand, at least half of whom have no residence under the same roof with their employers. Where do the betagged and buttoned and bullioned menials find shelter when they are off duty? What becomes of the hundreds of gloriously arrayed coachmen in three-cornered hats, some of them, and knee-breeches, and powdered heads, and coats of many colours? They presently turn the heads of the costly horses in a homeward direction, see their precious freight safely delivered back to the harbour from which it was launched, and then—where do they go, and what do they do? Mayfair is no

longer a place for them; they could not procure private lodgings in that exclusive neighbourhood for six times their wages. Is there a convenient 'house of call' for them somewhere handy, where they divest themselves of their theatrical trappings, and, assuming the modest garb of mere private individuals, tramp home to the Tottenham-court-road or Marylebone, where house-rent is cheap, and where they can eke out their 'off duty' time, as the postmen do, in mending shoes or in tailoring? And now that one comes to give the subject a moment's thought, there must be a very considerable number of other persons besides coachmen who have no visible means of existence, but without whose assistance the high-steppers and the mettlesome prancers would go ungroomed, and the carriage panels present an appearance very different from the present. Where are the Mayfair stablemen, the helpers and under-strappers, such as find employment in every well-appointed mews? One way or another there should be several thousand persons, married men with their families possibly, who depend for their daily sustenance on Mayfair patronage, and who at the same time have a domestic existence quite separate. Where is this colony of outdoor 'helps'? Somebody whispers, 'Find out Shepherd's-market, and you will be in its midst.'

The stranger in London in quest of Shepherd's-market would find it a matter of no small difficulty to discover that secluded place of public barter. That valuable chart of topographical information, the *Post-office Directory* map, which frankly declares the whereabouts of every other market in the metropolis, is strangely silent respecting that

one to which Shepherd lends his name. Distinctly enough are indicated Covent-garden, Farringdon, the New Cattle, Smithfield, and Oxford Markets. Even that disgracefully squalid and ill-conditioned poor relation of the market family, which is christened 'Clare,' is not forgotten; but with Shepherd's-market the map deals not, nor deigns to designate the not insignificant area it occupies. It is difficult to believe that this is accidental. Perhaps by a fiction of the laws of fashion there is no such place as a vulgar market within the patrician precincts of Mayfair. Maybe the reverential 'chartist'—to use an Americanism—in his topographical survey, was so overcome by the outrageous iniquity of fish, flesh, and fowl hucksters and vendors of low greengrocery, squatting down, as it were, on the very skirts of the aristocracy, that he passed by the offensive locality with his eyes cast skyward or with his pocket-handkerchief covering his grieved optics. Anyhow he failed to make a note of the market's existence. For the information of the curious, however, it may be stated that Shepherd's-market is to be found at the heart and centre of a square that has for its sides Curzon-street, Berkeley-square, Park-lane, and Mount-street, and that it may be approached from Piccadilly or from Park-lane, the latter by means of a hole in the wall and a flight of steep stone steps and a narrow high-walled passage. Ineed not, however, be so very particular in describing how Shepherd's-market may be arrived at by the public at large. It is more than possible that those who, by favour and patronage of the high and mighty, are permitted to set up their booths in the fair of May would much rather be left alone in that snug and lucrative seclusion they have

solongenjoyed. There are markets and markets, and the misguided individual who attempted to invade the domain of Shepherd in that free-and-easy frame of mind with which he would betake himself to make a purchase at the markets of Newport or Oxford would speedily be aware of the mistake he had made.

The popular idea of a marketplace is one that in a manner combines the wholesale and the retail, to the advantage of the buyer who brings his ready penny in his hand, and appreciates the spirited policy of 'small profits and quick returns.' A market is a place for bustle and excitement, where every vendor endeavours to cry his wares louder than his neighbour, and by making as much display and noise as possible to attract a share of custom to his shop. But this kind of thing is foreign to Shepherd's-market. The tradesmen there are as decorous in their behaviour and as quiet and demure in appearance as though their business premises were kitchen offices of the 'family' up-stairs. In every other London market may be discovered a contingent of the ragged and famished juvenile army of market prowlers; but I much question if the boldest tatterdemalion even of Covent-garden would dare show his face within a mile of Curzon-street after his first and last interview with the beadle to whom the mythical Shepherd deposes authority. Only that it would of course be highly improper to treat with anything like levity a subject of such gravity, one might imagine a very funny picture of a blundering butcher, or greengrocer, or fishmonger, of the Leather-lane market type, hearing of a Shepherd's-market shop being vacant, and, accepting the fact of its being a 'market,' as sufficient for his

purpose, embarking in business there. He would of course consult no one as to the style in which he should open the premises. In the narrow thoroughfare which leads through from Holborn-hill to Liquorpond-street and the back slums of Saffron-hill he had a way of his own—a profitable and an eminently satisfactory way—and he has yet to learn that what is good for Leather-lane will not be found equally acceptable by the 'West-enders.' It is scarcely likely, even were he disposed to listen to the same, that he would receive any useful hints from the blue-frocked fraternity of Shepherds (I am supposing the intruder to be a butcher). Tradesmen on whom the noblest in the land rely for part of their daily aliment would regard it as scarcely consistent with their dignity to consort with a coarse person accustomed probably to conduct his business from the exterior instead of the interior of the shop; to stand bareheaded perhaps on the pavement, clashing his knife and steel, and roaring out 'Buy, buy!' to a crowd of costermonger customers. Propriety forbid! At certain taverns,—'houses of call' for bakers,—there is a select room for the use especially of the 'fancy' members of the trade, while the ordinary members, the 'common squares' or 'bricks,' would think twice before they risked losing caste by being seen in familiar converse with a low-priced Mr. Doughy who keeps a 'tommy shop' in a poor neighbourhood. It is scarcely likely, therefore, that a man of scrags and low-quality beef from Leather-lane would find a cordial welcome in Shepherd's-market. They could not well interfere to prevent the threatened outrage. The vestry, if applied to, would be helpless in the matter, there being no act of parliament prohibiting a

butcher from conducting his honest business in the way that best pleased him. Meanwhile the butcher from Leather-lane would cheerfully proceed with his arrangements for what he would call a 'spanking' opening day. He would employ the gas-fitter to provide the whole length of the shop-front with the piping and burners for a brilliant illumination; he would have meat-hooks fixed as high on the front wall as could be utilised by the aid of a six-foot 'long arm'; he would have all ready prepared for the opening day a select assortment of those painted tickets he has hitherto found to be so attractive: 'The nobby shoulders at eight and a half!' 'Carrots are in—salt beef at sevenpence!' &c. As a climax he probably would hire a brass band to occupy the front room over the shop, and play a selection of the liveliest airs with both windows open. Then at a given signal the band would strike up its brazen loudest to the tune of 'Tommy, make room for your uncle' (not so much as being *apropos* to the occasion as that it may be interpreted as taking the form of a good-humoured appeal on the part of the new-comer to his fellow-tradesmen), the shutters would be lowered, the butcher's leather-lunged assistants banging their cleavers against the chopping blocks, roaring aloud, 'Hi, hi! Be in time, ladies! Hi, hi, hi! The rosy meat, fresh as paint and cheap as dirt! Hi, hi!' with noise enough to rouse the whole immediate neighbourhood. It would require a pen more graphic than mine to describe the consternation the stunning uproar would occasion. Powdered heads and aghast visages would be hastily thrust out at the back-windows of all the adjacent family mansions, while from a hundred pale lips would issue the

momentous question, 'What on herth's the matter?' Coachmen's and stablemen's wives from the neighbouring mews would come swarming out, not with the object of 'being in time,' as invited, but prepared to see Shepherd's-market in flames, and the fire-engines clattering in over the cobble-stones. 'Nobody gathers round' to regard the 'rosy meat,' none step up to avail themselves of 'shoulders' and 'legs' cheap as dirt and fresh as paint; wondering groups gather at the distant street-corners, and grooms and horse-tenders come hurrying out of the public-houses to see what the row is about, and from a distance contemplate in stark wonderment the bewildering innovation, and whisper and shrug their shoulders apprehensively as they discuss what Berkeley-square will think of such a vulgar hubbub, or what steps Mount-street will take to put it down. Perhaps, after an agitated consultation, a deputation of the plush brotherhood would make bold to proceed in a body to Mr. Shortribs' shop, and point out to him the impropriety of his proceeding; suggesting to that tradesman that he really should have some regard for the high respectability of the locality into which by some mistake he had made his way. I am afraid that such a movement would not mend matters, Mr. Shortribs being a man of bulk, and of pugnacious propensities when he is put out. He is put out now. The fact of the new shop having been already open for nearly three hours, with the brass band playing unceasingly, and the three young men in front hard at it, 'Hi-hi'-ing and clashing their knives and steels without a single joint being disposed of, has revealed to Mr. Shortribs that for once his judgment is at fault, and that Shepherd's-market is no place for

him. It is well if the plush deputation does not announce itself at the identical moment when the disagreeable conviction mentioned first forces itself on the disappointed butcher's mind.

Nor is it the butcher portion alone of the shopkeeping brotherhood of this pink and flower of markets that differs so widely from his kindred of less refined regions. It is perhaps not surprising to find that the fishmongers of the stable side of Mayfair are men of dignified presence, or that they wear black coats in their business and well-brushed chimney-pot hats. There always are 'upper ten' amongst fishmongers. But here the prevailing atmosphere of high gentility affects greengrocers and cheesemongers and poulterers as well. No one makes any display of his goods, 'market' though it is supposed to be. The poulterer reads the *Times* in the snug little counting-house within his shop, or lounges in an elegantly indolent manner at his shop-door, well knowing that he is as little likely to be called on by a chance customer as he is to be made ranger of the adjacent park. His is as much a 'bespoke' trade as that of a Bond-street bootmaker, and he probably knows the destination of every hare, pheasant, and partridge on his premises. He need not trouble himself as to the state of trade and market fluctuation; if the latter in its erratic flights even topped him, the Mayfair poulterer's, fixed retail tariff, why, he will be content to abide by the loss. There is nothing like coarseness, no rough dirty-handedness that savours of sending out coals, in the greengrocer of Mayfair stabledom. He necessarily has boys to carry out his wares, but they are not common boys, but good little lads; William and Henry and Joseph, who never fail

to call him 'sir,' who never whistle in the streets or sport upon their errands, and who act always in strict compliance with the rule that it is instant and ignominious discharge without a character to pass an upper servant or a butler without touching their cap. I looked about, but could not find the chimney-sweep's abode; but possibly he is in private residence, and if I had more particularly searched I might have discovered him dwelling in a modest but well-appointed abode, with two neatly inscribed bell-plates on either side of his door, the one 'Orders,' the other 'Visitors.' I did find the Mayfair rag-shop. Not by means of the black doll which hung out in front of the premises, however, or by the window beplastered with flaming placards, wherein was set forth, by the medium of highly-coloured picture and execrable poetry, the many advantages to be derived by patronising that particular establishment, foremost of which was the world-renowned probity and disinterestedness of the shopkeeper. A black doll, indeed! Was there so much even as an announcement that

'This is the shop your fat and bones to
take,

You'll get good prices here, and no
mistake.'

Was the shop-window a dirty window, with its panes showing old rags and tailors' cuttings and doctors' bottles and horse-hair? Was there exhibited amongst these articles of unsightly litter a broken pan containing oleaginous shapes of strange mould, ticketed 'Good beef dripping, eightpence a pound'? It might as well be asked was there a second-hand shoe-shop or the stock-in-trade of a cat-meat dealer anywhere visible. No; the purging influence of a noble atmosphere is not lost on one whose

humble vocation is to deal in kitchen refuse, and who has on the premises scales for weighing bones and rags and kitchen stuff. On the premises, but not visible to the passer-by. I at first took the place for a surgery, possibly of some doctor of eminence in the neighbourhood. It was in a narrow way, it is true, but its plate-glass windows were stained of a sober brown, and its curtained half-glass door was closed. Over the door was a tasteful lamp bearing simply the inscription 'General Merchant.' It was not until you more closely approached the premises that you discovered a few elegantly devised tablets hung from the inner sash, like pictures, and which bore announcements to the effect that kitchen stuff was purchased there, that wax and sperm ends might now be disposed of, and that the proprietor was not unwilling to negotiate for rags or left-off clothing. I did not see the proprietor, at least not to say positively that it was he. I did see a grave elderly gentleman in a well-cut suit of dark tweed and a soft felt hat enter at the curtained door, and close it after him just as though he lived there, but he wore spurs and carried a riding-whip under his arm. He did not look as though he had candle-ends about him, but for all that he might have been a customer. Or he might have been the present general merchant's father, retired and now living in Park-lane, who had just looked in to see how business was going on. Or, again, he might have been some titled personage of noble lineage, but with a slender banking account, who was making up to the general merchant's daughter and the handsome dowry with which that prosperous trader intended to endow her on her marriage-day.

But what of the Mayfair stable

population? Where the hundreds of coachmen and yard-helpers and harness-cleaners when horses and carriages are in close quarters? The latter, at all events, are not a very refined race, but, as commonly discovered, of rather a rough and uncouth breed, given at leisure time to a negligent toilet, and to the consumption of beer out of pewter measures, and of tobacco out of short pipes, at the bar of the public-house. There should be tap-rooms in which they play dominoes and cribbage with unclean packs of cards, and skittle-alleys from whence proceed the sound of nine-pins briskly 'floored' by the deftly-delivered ball. There should, if Mayfair stablemen be as others are, be seen untidy women—their wives—gossiping at street-doors and street-corners, and budding promises of future stablemen playing at horses or making mud-pies in the gutters. Nothing of the kind, however, is visible in this select locality. Stables there are on every side and in every turning: establishments of great 'job masters,' containing stalls enough to accommodate the horses of a regiment, and employing, some of them, a hundred hands or more; and private stables, ranging the whole length of long streets, the many rooms of which are occupied by the horse-tenders and the carriage-washers and their families; but the whole neighbourhood is orderly and quiet as the dulllest part of Brompton on a Sunday afternoon. The close proximity of the great houses by which the abodes of these humble folk are overshadowed seems to have an awe-inspiring effect on them, and the merry children, with delightfully clean pinafores and hair brushed as sleek as horse-hide, comport themselves, even when engaged in their wildest of outdoor games, as though perpetually oppressed by

the parental injunction, 'Hush! don't make a noise, whatever you do,' and refrain from hallooing and whooping, as it is their nature to, lest they should rouse the ire of some one in authority who is empowered to command their instant banishment. Not that the parents of the children are left unassisted to bring up the latter in the way they should go. The hidden hand of strict discipline is likewise the hand of bounty; and there is provided in their midst a school-house, handsome and commodious. Up an alley in a corner is a mission-room, where seriously-inclined coachmen and helpers and their wives no doubt pass many edifying evenings.

The rough-and-ready stableman appears to have no existence on this the 'seamy side' of Mayfair. Indeed, the seams are pressed so rigorously flat that the most sensitive policeman might pass his hand over them without discovering any amount of roughness to complain of; that is to say, if that which I saw was a fair sample of the behaviour of even the lowest grade of the male population. No wooden-clouted clowns clattering distractingly over the cobble-stones, with hay bands for leggings, and their patched unmentionables girdled at the waist by means of the pertaining braces. Nothing visible anywhere but the most scrupulous tidiness and neatness. Even the wheelbarrow-trundlers (I did not look to see if these vehicles were provided with

india-rubber tires to render them noiseless) were spick and span young fellows, with black boots and drab gaiters and natty tweed jackets, and looked as though ready, at a moment's notice, to slip into a livery-coat and a pair of Berlin gloves and mount the driving-seat. Bad language was not to be heard. Whether it is the purity of the atmosphere that insures a voluntary abandonment of that coarse conversation not uncommonly to be heard amongst men of stable connections, or whether the stern rules and regulations of the place insist on it, is not easy to say, but certainly, in the course of an hour's exploration, I heard no one swear.

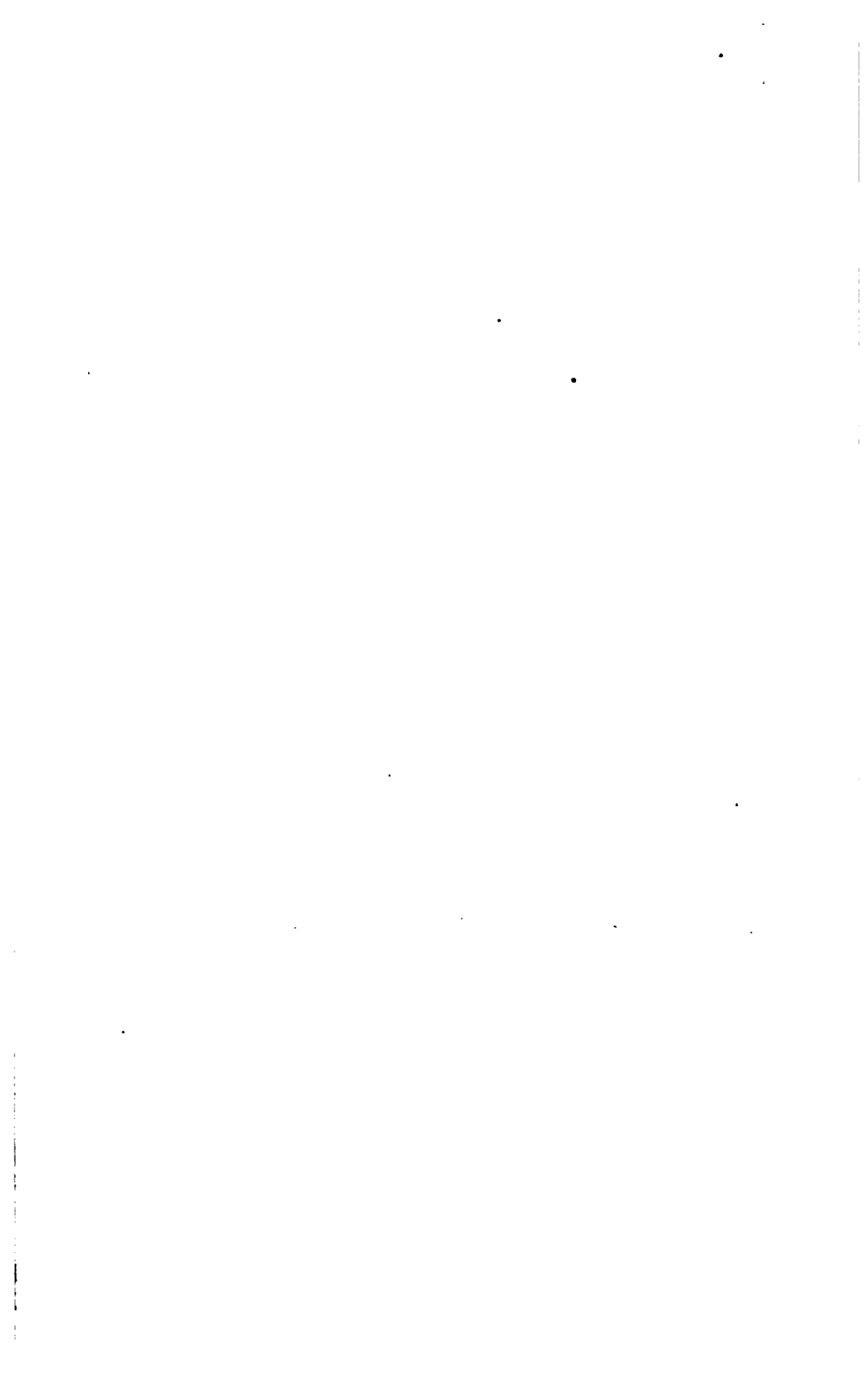
On the whole, I must admit that I quitted Shepherd's-market a wiser and, I trust, a better man. I am not ashamed to confess that my political tendencies have hitherto been Liberal, not to say Radical. I have spoken lightly of those who by hereditary right sit in lordly authority over us; and, I believe, more than once have gone even to the length of declaring my conviction that it would be possible for England to exist without the annual publication of Lodge's *Peerage*. I ask permission to withdraw that rash opinion; it was delivered in ignorance. Since I have discovered the chastening effect the mere shadow of a mighty aristocracy has on the people, I will never again object to its bodily presence, or question the wisdom of its ways.







THE MODERN ZODIAC:
AN ARTIST'S ALMANAC OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.



THE ROMANCE OF OLD LONDON.

NO. III. A MEMORY OF OLD LONDON BRIDGE.

THE grandson of my friend, Tom Darts,
Returning by the train that starts
From Cannon-street five-twenty-three,
But yesterday I chanced to see.
A lad he is just turn'd eighteen ;
Clear cut his face, and grave his mien.
His coat and gloves were fresh and new,
A faultless tie of Navy blue
Beneath his collar richly set ;
Tall was his hat, and black as jet.
No smile had he upon his face,
But calm he look'd, without a trace
Of feeling, either sad or gay ;
And not one word had he to say,
Nor time to lose in idle chat :
Too precious all his hours for that.
No sooner in the carriage seated
(Cool among others overheated)
Than, with an air of sapient calm,
A book he from beneath his arm
Drew quietly ; and both his eyes
He fix'd, and read with look so wise,
So unperturbed by rushing trains,
I envied him his steady brains.
Nor was it foolish fiction light
Engaged his mind ; but hematite
And iron ores—no doubt a cram
For some competitive exam.
And here I own, that though I can
Confront with ease a brother man,
Nor fear the face of good or bad,
I quail before *The Modern Lad*.
And though there's many an F.R.S.
I might without alarm address,
I fear me that my heart would fail,
And e'en my very lips grow pale,
If, looking from the awful height
Of all the 'ologies, through light
Of science in these learned days,
That boy should criticise my lays.
And yet I like the lad, though he
Affrights me so ; for oft I see
A something in his fair young face
That helps me once again to trace
The features of one dead and gone,

Who long has slept beneath a stone
 In country grave-yard quietly.
 He was a boy along with me,
 And he and I we toil'd together,
 And breasted storms in boisterous weather,
 When we were men ; and help'd to cheer
 Each other as each passing year
 Robbed us of some we held most dear.
 Yes, boys were boys when we were young ;
 We ran and laugh'd and wagg'd our tongue !
 I look'd across the glossy ridge
 Of that lad's hat, and saw the bridge*
 We used to play on cross the tide
 (For fancy ever is keen-eyed)
 Between St. Olave's tower square
 And old St. Magnus' lantern fair.
 Ah, that old bridge ! I see it still,
 Its many arches, mended ill ;
 Its coffer-dam and water-wheel ;
 Its cover'd alcoves, where we'd steal
 O' nights some ' Charley'† to awaken,
 And run away with laughter shaken.
 The grandsire of that reading lad
 Was Darts ; who ne'er an hour had
 Of liberty but I and he
 Were always off upon some spree.
 What games we had, we two young dogs,
 When children, running o'er the logs
 That used to lie, with other wares,
 Close by the shore, at Old Swan Stairs !
 And many a time we tumbled in,
 And got well wetted to the skin ;
 And once, when we were older grown,
 We jump'd into a boat alone,
 And started from Fresh-wharf. The tide
 Was running strong ; we vainly tried
 To ' shoot the bridge ;' but such a fall
 The other side the arches small
 There was, our boat at once was toss'd
 Keel upwards : we were all but lost.
 My strength too soon began to fail ;
 I'd ne'er been here to tell the tale
 Had not Darts held with all his might
 Me to the sterlings,‡ till our plight
 Was seen from off the wharf, and we,
 Half dead, were rescued happily.

* The old bridge crossed the river near St. Olave's, Tooley-street (the church with the square clock-tower seen when leaving London-bridge Station for Cannon-street), to St. Magnus', Fish-street-hill (the church with the lantern-tower on the City side).

† The Charlies were the watchmen before the introduction of the new police. They were generally men of venerable age. To 'knock over a Charley's sleeping-box' was a favourite diversion of youth in the bad old times.

‡ Sterlings—the boat-like wooden foundations on which the stone piers of the old bridge rested.

Scarce any day its hours went round
But in the river there was drown'd
Some luckless wight, such risk of life
On wave and shore there then was rife ;
So that—although I own I smarted
When that old bridge and I were parted,
And it was long ere I could view
With friendliness or love the new—
Yet, though I saw it go with pain,
I never wish it back again.
But many a crowded century
Must pass o'er this ere it can be
As rich in history, song, or praise,
As London-bridge of olden days.
The history of the English nation
From London-bridge to yonder station
At Cannon-street is all compress'd ;
The half of which, and that the best,
The old bridge shared ; therefore, to tell
All that at any time befell
That ancient place would tax a scribe,
Who should the powers of all his tribe
Combine. Whose knowledge, quaint and ripe,
Might rival Hollingshed or Strype, .
Or old John Stow ; while, like Macaulay
Or T. Carlyle, or Froude or Morley,
With vivid colours in his pen,
He'd fill again with living men
The bridge ; nor any worthy thing,
From days of Colechurch* to the king
Who last possess'd the English crown,
Would fail to set in order down.
Not mine the pen nor mine the task ;
I only humbly of you ask
That you, who pass that tower square
In Tooley street, and lantern fair
Perceive beyond the river there,
And know these churches bear the names
Of Northern heroes of whose claims
To memory here you stand in doubt,
Would let me try to help you out.

L. ALLDRIDGE.

(*To be continued as 'KING OLAF'S VICTORY.'*)

* The first stone bridge was begun by Peter of Colechurch, 1176, and although frequent repairs left but little of the original structure, no entirely new bridge ever took its place until the present one was erected, during the last reign, on a fresh site, by Sir James Rennie.

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

MINERAL PIGMENTS, AND THEIR RELATION TO HEALTH.

THE injuries to health caused by the use of lead pigments, such as white-lead, red-lead, chromate of lead (chrome yellow), orange chrome, &c., for all sorts of domestic purposes, are far more serious than is commonly supposed, small particles of these substances being continually liable to be introduced into the system along with food, and inhaled as dust mechanically abraded from painted objects, and suspended in the air. So much is this the case that, were any efficient substitutes for these deleterious compounds practically available, there would not be wanting advocates to insist on the compulsory avoidance of their use—at any rate, for numerous purposes for which they are at present employed. The same kind of argument applies, *à fortiori*, to the brilliant but horribly noxious vivid-green colouring matters prepared from copper and arsenic compounds, and technically known by various names, such as Scheele's green, emerald green, Schweinfurth's green, &c., according to difference in shade, produced by differences in the mode of their production. The almost inconceivable stupidity which allows a pigment of this dangerous nature to be freely used for all sorts of purposes and objects which would render it likely to be brought in contact with the human frame, stomach, or lungs, is only matched by the equally remarkable ignorance of the ordinary public of the dangers to which they are thus unnecessarily exposed. Not only

is this substance to be met with in wall-papers, from which the pigment is liable to be detached in large quantities during dusting, &c., or even by casually brushing against the wall, but it is often found in alarming quantities in the artificial flowers and leaves, &c., frequently used for ladies' head-dresses, &c., and occasionally is the tinting material in sea-green muslins and tarletans. Indeed cases are on record where milliners, seamstresses, artificial-flower makers, and even the sellers of the articles, have been afflicted with all the symptoms of arsenical poisoning from the mere inhalation of dust dislodged from such fabrics during their making up into dresses, &c., or whilst packing and unpacking the boxes containing them; and the dust collected in a comparatively quiet corner of a crowded ballroom has been found to be heavily charged with particles of arsenical compounds mechanically shaken off from the ladies' dresses, &c., during the exercise of dancing. The old Romans and other inhabitants of Italy did not employ pigments of this noxious character—at any rate, to the extent that we more civilised nations think proper, notwithstanding our arrays of sanitary officers and inspectors. Thus a chemical examination of various colouring matters and pigments found in Pompeii has been recently made by Signor P. Palmieri; most of these substances, although so long buried, are yet of such a nature as to have undergone little or no change. Three of the yellows were found to be natural ochreous minerals, the

shades being altered and softened by the admixture of white clay, gypsum, or chalk. One green pigment, and one only, contained copper; another consisted of oxide of iron, carbonate of lime, silica, and alumina, and was in all probability the substance alluded to by Pliny under the name of 'terra verde' ('Sunt etiamnum novitii duo colores et vilissimi; viride quod Appianum vocatur . . . fit et ex creta viridi'). Five substances of red or brownish-red shades were found to be simply ochres; another substance was a mixture of a number of particles of various kinds; whilst a rose-coloured pigment appeared to consist of a white clay (mixed with a little chalk and phosphate of lime), saturated with an organic colouring matter more stable in its power of resisting bleaching agents, such as chlorine and bromine, than either madder or cochineal. From various statements of Pliny, conjoined with the results of the chemical examination of this substance, Signor Palmieri concludes that it was probably a compound colour derived from the Tyrian purple (from *murex* or *purpura*), madder, and the colouring matter of the kermes (or cochineal-like parasite of the *quercus coccifera*), this organic mixture being made to saturate a white clay, so as to produce an extremely stable and fast kind of lake. Not only, however, do we continue to employ lead, copper, and arsenic compounds freely in the decorations of our houses (not to hint at the occasional use of bismuth and lead compounds in 'blanc de perles,' hair-dyes, and other so-called 'toilette requisites'), but new processes for preparing these and suchlike bodies more cheaply are from time to time invented. Thus a considerable saving of cost in the manufacture of white-lead by a new process has been

recently announced by Messrs. Fitzgerald & Molloy, the pigment being in this case made direct from the lead ore by a succession of complex chemical processes, instead of being (as in the old 'Dutch' method) manufactured from metallic lead previously smelted from the ore and carefully refined. On the other hand, the energies of chemists have been long bent in the endeavour to prepare on a large scale pigments which can compete in tint and other essential qualities with these poisonous metallic preparations, and in some instances with a fair amount of success. Thus of late a series of colours have been prepared from what used to be regarded as a rare metal—*tungsten*, which, however, turns out to be more widely distributed and more cheaply attainable than was supposed. That yellows, blues, and greens of dull shades were obtainable from the natural compounds of this metal by sundry chemical processes has indeed been known for years; but only recently have they been obtained in a commercial form in quantity and of quality admitting of their practical employment. Specimens of these new varieties of pigments of fine tint and of permanent qualities, prepared by Dr. Versmann by new processes, were recently exhibited to those interested in such matters, as illustrative of a lecture on this subject delivered at the Royal Institution by Dr. Alder Wright. From the same sources tungsten-white, a substitute for white-lead, is also derived, although as yet it has hardly been prepared of such quality as to be equal to the best white-lead. Heavy spar, or barytes, when suitably purified, and especially when prepared by certain chemical processes, forms another rival; hardly, however, equal to good white-lead as a pigment, although possessing,

like tungsten-white, the great advantages of being non-poisonous, and of not discolouring in the air. The cheapness of this substance, by the way, often leads to its being used to mix with genuine white-lead, the effect of this adulteration being, unlike that of most similar practices, rather conducive to the health and benefit of the party imposed on than the reverse. Again, an oxide of zinc known as *zinc white* has been largely recommended as a comparatively harmless substitute (though by no means altogether wholesome) for white-lead; whilst recently Professor Barff brought before the notice of the Society of Arts a new process for preparing an analogous zinc pigment, containing sulphur combined with zinc, as *zinc sulphide*. Zinc, indeed, is only comparatively uninjurious: some of its compounds are medicinally employed on account of their emetic and purgative properties; but it is a poison of a far less active nature than lead, and in particular differs from lead in not being what is termed *cumulative*—that is, in not accumulating in the system for months or years when imbibed in very minute quantities, and finally producing an action due to the total sum of the small amounts thus gradually introduced. One use of zinc compounds that has been met with of late is, however, especially to be reprobated—viz. their incorporation with indiarubber goods, such as the feeding-bottle tubes for infants, or the gum-rings, &c., intended for the delectation of teething babies. Specimens of such vulcanised-rubber articles have been examined, which contained upwards of half their weight of oxide of zinc; and cases of sickness and illness on the part of children have been noticed, brought about by their sucking toys, &c., made of rubber thus prepared.

GERMAN SILVER.

The term German silver has long been applied to an alloy or mixture of metals consisting of copper, nickel, and zinc, the name being derived from the use of such a composition for the lower currency of some of the *ci-devant* German States. When the red metal copper is alloyed with from one-third to one-fifth of its weight of the white metal zinc, a more or less yellow alloy is formed, known as brass when full yellow, but called by various other names (*e.g.* tombak, similor, pinchbeck, Mannheim gold, &c.), according to the precise composition and shade. If, however, to this yellow alloy a certain amount of the white metal nickel is added, the whole becomes white or yellowish white, without materially losing the special qualities which render brass so useful a substance in the manufacture of a thousand and one articles of common use; in particular the ternary alloy of copper, zinc, and nickel is, when the ingredients are duly proportioned, easily melted into ingots, rolled into plates, and punched, cut, or stamped into any required form; whilst the articles made from it possess sufficient rigidity to be bent out of shape, dented, or otherwise deformed, only with some considerable difficulty. Moreover this composition possesses the valuable quality of firmly adhering to a coating of silver deposited on its surface by suitable electrical means; *i.e.* an electro-silvered article, the basis of which is German silver, will not readily allow of the silver being peeled or stripped off by ordinary hard usage, in this respect having a considerable advantage over electro-silvered articles made from various other alloys, and even over the old-fashioned Sheffield plate, made by soldering together a block of copper and a

thin strip of silver, rolling out the compound mass into a sheet, so that a thin coating of silver overlays a comparatively large thickness of copper, and finally fashioning this compound sheet into the articles required. The earlier alloys used for electro-silvering when the art was first practised were not so proportioned as to give a white composition, the mixture (consisting of about eight parts copper, three of zinc, and two of nickel) being often decidedly yellow, or becoming so on exposure to air; whenever the edges of the plated article got a little worn, so that the silver was abraded, the yellow underlying metal became visible. The alloy now used for the best electro-plate, however, is so proportioned that the yellow shade is much less strongly marked; so that in consequence, even if the silver coating be worn off here and there, the fact is not readily discernible unless on close inspection. The proportion of nickel in this alloy is somewhat greater, and that of copper somewhat less, than in the yellower metal, and technically the term German silver is often restricted to the yellow metal, the whiter composition being generally designated as *argentan*, *albata*, *electrum*, &c. The price of nickel is subject to considerable fluctuation, and this to a great extent interferes with the use of alloys containing this substance, a manufacturer who has speculated in a large quantity of nickel at a high price being liable to considerable losses should the price rapidly fall. Recently it has been found that the power of nickel to whiten brass without materially interfering with its useful physical qualities is shared by various other metals. Thus a new substitute for German silver has been lately brought out by Messrs. Biermann & Clodius of

Hanover, consisting essentially of an alloy of copper, zinc, and manganese; *i.e.* this new alloy is German silver, in which the nickel is replaced by manganese. It is, however, difficult in practice to manufacture manganese free from iron, so that the new alloy usually contains a little of this fourth metal in addition: a specimen that possessed only a slight yellow tint, bore a fine polish, and remained unaffected by immersion in water for forty days, was found to consist of about four parts zinc, eight manganese, and thirty-four copper, to one of iron. An analogous alloy, containing the metal hitherto regarded as somewhat rare—tungsten—has also been recently brought out by Dr. Versmann, who has succeeded in cheapening the price at which tungsten can be procured so as to render it commercially available. This tungsten German silver (containing copper, zinc, and tungsten) is characterised by the possession of considerable sonority, a plate or bar of it suspended by a thread and struck by a hammer emitting a clear ringing note.

LIGHTING BY ELECTRICITY.

When a combustible body burns in such a way as to give light, only a very minute portion of the energy generated by the combustion makes its appearance as light; so much so, that it is possible to obtain a much greater illumination by the expenditure of a given quantity of oil, &c., by making the heat evolved by the combustion work an engine, which in turn drives a magneto-electric machine, and employing the electric current thus produced to give rise to the electric light by passing between two carbon points separated by a small space. Thus it has been shown by Professor Anthony of Cornell University that the light obtained by the direct combustion of petro-

leum in an ordinary lamp is much less than that produced if the same oil be used as fuel to drive the magneto-electric machine. The electric light produced by means of a 5-horse Brayton petroleum-oil engine was found to be equal to that developed by 234 petroleum lamps burning jointly 16 lbs. of oil per hour; the engine, however, only consumed $6\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. of oil per hour, so that the electric-light arrangement gave rise to about $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as much light from a given quantity of oil as that produced by direct combustion in a lamp. The chief difficulty in the way of utilising electricity as a source of light has hitherto been the cost of generating the electric current; and when an ordinary voltaic battery is employed, the cost of the zinc and chemicals consumed is without doubt much more than that of the ordinary gas or candles required to give the same illuminating power. It would, however, seem that by using gas as a motive power an actual economy would result were the electric light substituted for ordinary illuminating agents in large rooms, &c., requiring powerful luminous appliances. Dr. Siemens recently pointed out in his presidential address to the Iron and Steel Institute that the vast natural stores of energy, provided by waterfalls and by the tide, could easily be made to work turbines, &c., and so generate almost any required electrical current; thus the mechanical force of the Falls of Niagara is equivalent to that generated by the yearly consumption of 266,000,000 tons of coal, taking the height at 150 feet, and assuming, as has been estimated, that 100 millions of tons of water are precipitated over the cataract every hour. Sir William Armstrong has taught us how to carry high-pressure mains to considerable

distances, whilst at Schaffhausen and other places on the Continent power is transmitted to a spot two miles distant by means of quick-working steel ropes passing over large pulleys. It would not, therefore, be necessary that the motive power required to drive an engine should be actually utilised on the spot, as it might be thus conveyed to more convenient localities at some considerable distance in case of necessity. From the magneto-electric machine, wherever set up, copper conductors of suitable size would convey powerful electric currents to considerably greater distances, where the electricity could be utilised to give light; thus a copper rod, three inches in diameter, would suffice to transmit the electricity generated by a machine requiring 1000 horse-power to a distance of thirty miles, where it would generate light to the extent of a quarter of a million candle-power, which would suffice to illuminate a moderately-sized town. Even in many districts remote from the sea, and from waterfalls or rivers, it would be possible to generate powerful electrical currents by the burning of many substances now entirely wasted. In colliery districts shales and inferior coal could readily be partially burnt, as proposed by Dr. Siemens years ago, at the bottom of the shafts, and the combustible gases thus produced led up the shafts and to some further distance, if need be, through the ascending power of the hot gases, which might then be directly used for the ordinary purposes of fuel or employed to generate electricity; whilst much vegetable and other combustible refuse accumulating in our dustbins might be utilised for the same kind of purpose. Lignite, peat, and other substances of small value as fuel, when burnt directly, can be readily used as gas-producers

in Siemens' generators, and thus rendered available for diminishing our yearly drafts on our rapidly diminishing stores of coal.

PROTECTION AGAINST FIRE.

In the United States about eight-tenths per cent (80 cents per \$100) of the total value of combustible property are annually destroyed by fire; in Europe the ratio is only about one-third of this. The loss occasioned by fires that could be readily extinguished, were suitable appliances on the spot shortly after the outbreak, is a very considerable percentage on the total amount, and consequently great efforts are now being made to diminish the time required to bring engines, &c., on the spot after the alarm of fire is given. In New York, Berlin, and some other towns a system of telegraphs for the purpose of communicating fire-alarms to the central stations has been for some time in use; the effect of which is considerably to diminish the number of serious fires that take place annually, by enabling engines and men to be on the spot rapidly, and so to prevent the increase in virulence of the fire to a point too great to be readily stopped. Such a system has not yet been introduced into England, and as a result the percentage of 'serious' fires that occurred in London during the years 1873, 1874, and 1875 was upwards of 10, whilst in Berlin it only amounted to less than 3; a serious fire meaning one for the extinction of which more than two engines are requisite. The telegraphs consist of an apparatus fixed at street-corners, in pillar-boxes or in other ways, so as to guard against accidental or wilful damage. This apparatus is protected by a glass front, and when an alarm is to be given the glass is opened or broken, and a handle pulled;

this communicates motion to certain appliances, whereby a signal is sent by means of electricity to the central station. To guard against the chance of derangement of this apparatus, the signal is transmitted by the rupture of a current which is always flowing from the central station to each district telegraph annunciator, a different letter or series of letters, on the Morse principle, being thus transmitted for each annunciator. Any imperfect action of the apparatus is thus known immediately by the cessation of the continuous current. As soon as the alarm is received at the central office, a message is forthwith sent to the nearest fire-stations, from which the engines, &c., are forthwith despatched. Every few minutes saved in bringing engines upon the scene of a fire largely increases the chance of its being rapidly extinguished, the chance of a fire becoming serious increasing with the square of the time elapsing between the outbreak and the arrival of the brigade. It is noteworthy that cities and towns exist which are, from the peculiar circumstances attending their constructions, practically fireproof; thus Buenos Ayres and Montevideo in South America mainly consist of one-story houses, on account of the prevalence of earthquakes. Owing to the high price of timber and iron joists and girders, these materials are very sparingly used in house-construction; the beams and wood actually employed when absolutely indispensable are of peculiar kinds of hard wood, such as cedar, extremely difficult to ignite; window and door boxes, lathing, wainscoting, and skirting are conspicuous by their absence, the windows consisting simply of sashes in a frame. Stone, which is rapidly disintegrated by heat, is also very sparingly employed, bricks and cement being the chief mate-

rials used in construction; the roofs are nearly flat, having a slope of one in 30 or 35, and composed of thin bricks $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. The floors are not boarded, but are all of brick. If a cartload of shavings and pine-wood were placed under a bed in Buenos Ayres, and the furniture piled on the top and the whole fired, four or five of the hard-wood joists of the roof would be burnt through, and the bricks and tiles would fall through: but there the damage would end; the fire could not spread laterally, owing to the want of combustible matter, and the large mass of brick and cement which would naturally check the spread of the flames. In all these respects these South American cities are about diametrically opposed to the European system of building, which is, in many respects, about as well calculated to facilitate the spread of flames as though that were the precise object aimed at.

PIONEER RAILWAYS.

A proposition for the establishment of a cheap and novel variety of railway has been brought forward by Mr. J. L. Haddan, the essential features of which are the construction of a kind of railing or fence supported on stakes or piles driven into the ground, the top rail of which is surmounted by a light iron railway bar. The light engines and carriages running on this *single-rail* line straddle over it, as it were, so that the carriages stand to the railway in much the same relation as the panniers on a mule's back to the animal's spine; the construction is, indeed, intended to rival a caravan of camels or mules conveying merchandise, &c., over a desert or semi-civilised country. In countries infested with white ants, such as Africa and China, the railing or railway

would be wholly constructed of iron; in Canada, where wood is cheap, of wood, with the exception of the top iron rail, which need not weigh more than twelve pounds per yard. The expense of construction of such a line would be but trifling compared with the cost of permanent works, embankments, bridges, &c., required by ordinary railway lines, even when only single; the gradients may be severe, but not necessarily, as the line may be, and indeed should be where practicable, constructed along the mule-tracks, which centuries of experience have indicated as the best route for foot and animal passengers. No bridges over streams would be required, and no liability would be incurred of piers, embankments, and arches being washed away by floods. The character of the line adapts it to districts and climates where ordinary railways would be wholly impracticable; thus it has been suggested that a 'pioneer railway' might be readily constructed over the Palæocrystic sea, so that the next Arctic Expedition might find its way direct to the Pole by rail. Over the Transvaal of South Africa, or through the Euphrates Valley, or in the back districts of China and Tartary, or in Central Africa, the 'pioneer railway' could equally well be used; any number of side-branches on the same system could easily be adapted where necessary; separate lines for passengers and goods traffic can be readily and cheaply constructed on those parts of the main line where the traffic is sufficiently great to render this desirable. No stations would be requisite, the trains being able to stop anywhere with equal facility. The moderate speed (10 to 20 miles an hour) at which the trains would run, with the light weight and efficient brake-power, would, in all countries fa-

voured with a clear atmosphere entirely dispense with the necessity for signalmen; so that not only the expenses of construction, but those of working the line, would be but small as compared with the ordinary railway system.

NEW COATING FOR SHIPS' BOTTOMS.

According to experiments recently made by Captain F. Warren neither marine vegetation nor shellfish will adhere to paper immersed in sea-water; and consequently, by coating over the bottoms of ships with a cement which will at once adhere to the iron or wood and to sheets of paper or *papier maché*, and then affixing the latter material, a kind of sheathing is given which is almost completely proof against the usual fouling agents. This invention has been recently tested in the Portsmouth dockyard. An iron plate was coated with ordinary brown paper in this way, and immersed in the harbour for six months; on examination the unprotected surface was covered with rust and shellfish, whilst the coated side was quite free from oxidation, save at the edges of the coating; neither grass nor barnacles adhered to the paper. A particular kind of cement has been also introduced by Captain Warren for the purpose of affixing the paper to the iron; this cement melts at a higher temperature than pitch, and consequently may be usefully employed instead of pitch for the seams of the decks and top-sides of vessels in tropical climates.

THE VANGUARD.

The Admiralty have accepted a tender for raising the *Vanguard*, with the option of either taking delivery of the vessel when saved and brought into dry dock on payment of 175,000*l.* to the contractor, or of receiving from the contractor

20,000*l.*, and handing over to him the ship and all its contents. In order to raise the vessel appliances are requisite far superior in power to anything hitherto employed: the weight of the hull, partly filled with sand, &c., as it must be from the washing in at the enormous hole made by the ram of the Iron Duke, is probably about 20,000 tons, the weight whilst under water being some 5000 tons. It is proposed to employ four enormous pontoons, each 175 feet long, 50 feet broad, and 15 deep, and divided into 45 compartments fitted with patent sluices and valves. These pontoons being sunk into position alongside of the wreck, the sand must be dredged away, and a large number of steel-wire ropes, each capable of supporting nearly 300 tons, must be passed under the ship about five feet apart, and fastened to the pontoons. In order to effect these operations, however, special diving-dresses are required to enable the wearers to work under water at a depth of 20 fathoms for more than an hour consecutively; the great pressure at this depth prevents the ordinary diving-dress from being used for more than half an hour at a time. When all is ready the water in the pontoons will be displaced by air, and then the pontoons will be caused to rise, bringing the hull of the *Vanguard* with them.

NEW BOOKS.

We have two interesting works of travel to which we will first direct the attention of our readers. Mr. De Cosson really made a brilliant and rapid dash into Abyssinia, and has written a book* which is replete with adventurous effort and important information. The

* *The Cradle of the Blue Nile: a Visit to the Court of King John of Ethiopia.* By E. A. De Cosson, F.R.G.S. Two vols. (John Murray.)

English, as a nation, have hardly done as much as they could for Abyssinia. We spent blood and treasure freely, and achieved a glorious success. But we forgot that peace has her victories no less than war. We had an opportunity such as may never occur again for promoting Christianity and civilisation in the east of Africa. We had roads and railways and infinite prestige; all the rough ground was broken up,—all healing and beneficial influences. But, unlike the Romans of old, our work passed away with ourselves, and we have left no enduring monuments of our occupation of the country. We have almost forgotten to inquire how Abyssinia, king and people, have fared since we overthrew King Theodore, and took friendly charge of King Theodore's son. We still believe, however, that this is a matter on which the country would wish to be kept well informed. Among the many chiefs who shared dominion in the vast warlike kingdom of Ethiopia after the fall of Theodore, Prince Kassa of Tigre emerged conspicuous, and at last came to his throne, and became Yohannes of Ethiopia. We believe the secret of his success was that he made a judicious investment in English muskets. In 1873 Mr. De Cosson made his way to his court through Abyssinia and Upper Nubia. The journey was undertaken simply for his amusement, but it was probably of some political service to this country. He really seems to have done a great deal towards modifying the slave-trade in Abyssinia. He sides entirely against Egypt in the matter of her encroachments on the Abyssinian frontier, and believes that she is the real abettor of the African slave-trade. Mr. De Cosson faithfully and lucidly records in a diary-form all the particulars of his journey, which

abounded with great perils, great fatigues, and great successes.

The historical notes are interesting. Mr. De Cosson confirms the general accuracy of Bruce's narrative, except that he cannot say that he ever saw any steaks cut out of the living cow. But we must go back to the earliest dates. The royal family declare that they are the descendants of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. They were converted to Christianity—and a very debased form of Christianity it is—so early as the fourth century. Dean Stanley in his *Eastern Church* has some interesting notes on the Church of Abyssinia. The Portuguese came here believing that in the Emperor of Abyssinia they recognised the legendary Prester John, a veritable Pope, a King of kings endued with eternal youth. The aspirations of the Portuguese in their Oriental voyages are set forth in the *Lusiad* of Camoens, that solitary epic poem of Portugal. We are glad, by the way, to recognise a new edition of Michell's famous translation of Camoens, edited with preface and notes by Mr. Hodges.* The fortress-cathedral and the palace of Gondar are monuments of what the Portuguese achieved. There is solidity and completeness about all they did. The castle of Gondar is a picturesque and noble mass of buildings, and in the rear are the stables where the old Abyssinian kings used to keep their lions.

The remarks of such a keen, albeit youthful, observer as Mr. De Cosson are always amusing and accurate. He was fortunate in meeting a German naturalist who had resided thirty-seven years in the country, studying the botany and geology, and had taken unto himself an 'Eastern bride.' This sage, Count Schimper, thought that a single mountain in Abyssinia

* George Bell & Sons.

might well occupy a man for a lifetime. Mr. De Cosson was very much struck with the young ladies of the country. 'Abyssinian girls come running down to fill their water-jars at the river, and steal a look at the camp of the white strangers. They were lithesome graceful creatures, of a clear dark-brown colour, and looked very picturesque in their short kirtles and spotted leopards' skins, and their black hair gathered up into a classical knot at the back of the head.' With this agrees the language of Dr. Livingstone: 'Many have finely-shaped heads, straight or aquiline thin noses and thin lips, magnificent forms, with small feet and hands and graceful limbs.' This is certainly not the nigger physiognomy. Many persons have been greatly exercised in mind whether St. Augustin of Hippo was a negro. It would of course be desirable to ascertain every detail about the great African bishop. There was one German scholar who once wrote a treatise on the quantity of the penultimate in the name of Monica, St. Augustin's mother. He must have been like the scholar whom we think Mr. Gladstone applauds, who regretted that he had not early in life concentrated all his energies on the dative case. Ethnology and physiognomy would suggest that the great bishop, if of African and not Latin descent, would belong to the Abyssinian and not the negro type. We hear a story of monkeys devouring oysters. 'The monkeys who live in the woods come down in troops to collect oysters; but he could never get sight of a monkey eating one. At last, however, he discovered an open place in a secluded part of the forest, where the whole ground was thickly strewn with shells, and by watching it he found that the monkeys were in the

habit of congregating there to eat their oysters in company, flinging the empty shells at the heads of one another.' The Abyssinians are rather cheerful in their habits. Every visitor is expected to take a couple of bottles of tedge; but then, like Europeans, they have the privilege of having a servant standing behind them, to whom, unlike Europeans, they may pass on the bottle. 'Good tedge is rather heady; we always took care to keep a native servant with a steady head standing behind us for the special service of emptying our bottles, a duty which it seemed to give him the greatest satisfaction to perform.'

At the commencement of the second volume Mr. De Cosson is fairly at the court of the African king. Court and courtiers are excellently described. Our Queen's letter to the King had been placed in all the principal churches of the land. Abyssinia has been called the mother of Egypt because the Nile is fed by its thousand streams. The natives have an absurd idea of turning the course of the river in order to avenge themselves on the Khedive. The author went out to the great lake Tzana, and had finesport with the 'hippos.' It is curious how the ways and methods of civilisation have extended into the heart of Africa. The traveller had been obliged to leave behind him a box of the Maria Teresa dollars, which form the most prized currency of the country. 'Fortunately the king was desirous of transmitting money to his newly appointed consul in London [Mr. H. S. King, the publisher], and on our giving him cheques for 200*l.* ordered his treasurer to count us out a thousand silver dollars, which were borne to our hut in great state. As may be supposed, the king had never seen a cheque before, and when we ex-

plained to him that it was an order for his consul to receive a thousand dollars in gold from our treasure-keepers, he asked where the seal was; for in Ethiopia all documents are sealed instead of signed, as is the usual custom throughout the East. K., with ready wit, pointed out the embossed penny stamp on the cheque, and the king was satisfied.' When Mr. De Cosson had returned beyond the Abyssinian frontier he came to Galabat, and visited its slave-market. This is an awful chapter, but it ought to be read by all those who would know what the slave-trade is, and have some hazy idea that it is pretty well on its way to be abolished. The ride across the desert and the sail down the Blue Nile fill up the second part of the second volume. It is here that the only sign of weakness appears, in a bit of padding, 'The Story of Leila.' The work, as a whole, is a genuine and lively book of travels, and can be heartily recommended to all readers.

Another work of travel and adventure, interesting enough in its way, is Mr. Sterndale's book *Seonee*.* The book is full of adventure, tiger-adventure most of all. Mr. Sterndale has thrown his work, however, into somewhat unusual form. He has developed it in the shape of a story, so far as that can be a story which has little dialogue and no plot. The story form is very attractive to young children; but bigger children like a body of safe facts, from which they may draw their own conclusions. The suspicion is created that the narrative form might be adopted to conceal a poverty of matter. We are bound to say, however, that Mr. Sterndale writes out of a fulness of knowledge, and

there is a meritorious absence of padding. It is also to be observed that the events described happened some fifteen or twenty years ago, and Seonee has confessedly changed its character and appearance very much in that interval of time. Having noted these circumstances, we may without concern give ourselves up to the enjoyment of a very fascinating book.

As we have said, the work is full of adventure, and Mr. Sterndale is careful to impress upon his readers—which may include many who may desire to follow large game in India—that the failures and disappointments are very many; and a book such as he writes of course relates to the prizes, and not to the blanks. We suppose, for instance, that all the successful tiger-hunts are recorded. The most ferocious man-eater of all did not fall to English guns, but to an accidental shot of a poor sycee. He complains that sportsmen exaggerate by reckoning the length of the animal from the tip of the tail, whereas there may be a much heavier animal with a much shorter tail. The caudal appendage has not much to do with it. The Seonee country is, or used to be, a regular nursing-ground for tigers. At the present day the tale of human lives lost through tigers is immense—many thousands annually—and even Mr. Freeman could have no objections to the field-sports which rid the country of such ferocious brutes. The panthers seem every bit as bad as the tigers. Night-shooting has the objection that, unless the bullet kills at once, the victim may wander away and die after days of misery. This is often the case in the day-time amid the rocky hills of India, and much more in the night. Fordham, the principal character in the book, advises that the wild animal should be brought to bay; 'it is better that the poor

* *Seonee, or Camp Life on the Sattara Range. A Tale of Indian Adventure.* By R. A. Sterndale, F.R.G.S. (Sampson Low, Marston, & Co.)

creature should die thus than to creep away to linger with an ill-aimed bullet in its body.' Mr. Sterndale has a good deal to say about elephants, whom he describes as very delicate animals, and peculiarly liable to colds and inflammations, and are for ever being physicked by their keepers. Though a very timid animal, he gathers boldness from his rider, and will face the fiercest tiger. It is interesting to know that Mr. Sterndale is somewhat of a believer in the sea-serpent, and in reference to that fabulous animal discusses the sea-snakes of the Indian Ocean. The author mentions the saying of a man newly arrived in India. 'Well, Spelter,' some one asked him, 'how do you like India?' 'My dear boy,' replied Spelter, taking a pull at a long tumbler full of iced brandy-and-soda, 'it is the finest country in the world for a powerful thirst.' We can well believe the author's statement that on the arid plain a man would willingly give a five-pound note for a bottle of cool soda-water. 'How is it on such occasions one always thinks of cool champagne-cup or Gunter's ices, or other things which are quite out of reach? It is the tantalising vision that tortures the poor wretch who sinks to die on the sands of the desert—the mirage of cool refreshing streams and palm-trees reflected in the bosom of placid lakes.' The volume has an appendix and notes, the former consisting of a topographical and historical sketch of the Seonee district. The volume concludes with a spirited account of the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, a well-told chapter of veritable history. The character of Fordham comes very well out in the description. He is the kind of officer which Colonel Newcome must have been, and we would fain believe a true type of a very large proportion of Indian officers.

Most of us take a great interest in Eton. With all its faults, it is the first of English schools. There are few indeed who have not some associations with it. We have had long essays and letters about Eton—Jacob Omnium to wit—newspaper discussions, parliamentary discussions, evidence and argument to any extent. But there is one kind of information which has never been exactly supplied until the present time—the information which an observant and intelligent Eton boy could give us. There is now before the public a little book* giving an account of a day's doings at Eton. It is a typical day, and something more. Every day cannot be exactly like this. It combines the salient points of various days into a single day. It is a very amusing book. Masters are often critical upon the boys, but here the tables are turned, and the boy is critical upon the masters. We have a very clear and pleasant account of Eton, which will enable anxious parents to realise their boys' lives very fully. The young gentleman, who, we believe, is hardly seventeen, shows a remarkable amount of literary ability.

In subsequent editions the young gentleman assures sceptical readers that he is still an Eton boy, and likely to remain so for another year. We hardly know whether we should congratulate or condole with the master of the form on so precocious a pupil. We hope the young gentleman will apply himself sedulously to the proper studies of the place, and not allow a lucky literary hit to interfere with his serious education. The tone of the book is throughout that of pleasant chaff. To enable readers to appreciate Eton terms he has added an

* *A Day of my Life; or Every-day Experiences at Eton.* By an Eton Boy. (Sampson Low, Marston, & Co.)

explanatory glossary, which he says has given him more trouble than all the rest of the work put together. We wish there had been a little more notice of the more serious pursuits of the place. The Eton Debating Club has always held a high place, and has been a great feeder of the University Union; and we should like to know something of the æsthetic tastes of the young gentlemen. We never meet cleverer boys, or duller and worse educated, than at Eton. We suspect that the dull are somewhat neglected, and that the clever boys—and we consider our author a very clever boy—get ample attention. But the true theory of a school is to turn out all boys as well as possible.

We must now recur to that more direct element of fiction, which even writers on grave subjects find it hard to eliminate from their pages. And first let us give a hearty welcome to *Tatiana*, a true wifely heroine, who soon conciliates the regard of all readers. In several ways the work is very interesting. Considering the interest there is at the present time in all Russian subjects, it is remarkable how profoundly ignorant we all are of Russian literature. The French, and even the Americans, are far ahead of us in this respect. All that the English public have are translations of a few novels; the number might be counted on the fingers of one hand without going to the other. Russian fiction may be divided into the Romantic and the Realistic schools. The former sentimental school was chiefly imitative, the imitations being mainly of Rousseau and our own Richardson. The Russians imported their literature almost bodily from Western Europe; they have translations in thousands of modern books. The compliment is only rarely repaid by a version in English, French, or German.

What Russian modern fiction mainly exhibits, in which it has an historical value, is the conflict between the new civilisation and the old forms of barbarism. This is clearly and fully brought out in this novel of *Tatiana, or the Conspiracy*.* The conspiracy mentioned is no conspiracy at all; it is a device of a head of police to promote business and avenge himself on his personal enemies. The Emperor Nicholas himself, for a few pages, is one of the characters of the book, and is depicted not untruly, not unkindly; but the net result is to inspire a horror of absolutism, and the instruments which absolutism employs. We should wish, however, that some of the darker features of bureaucracy were overdrawn. The Siberian part of the work is done with remarkable power. It brings before us the cruel relentless iron rule of the Muscovite. It touches that old chord, to which all readers of *Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia*, will respond. As a transcript of Russian life, readers of fiction will find that they are entering on almost entirely a new province in this novel of stirring incident and picturesque description.

King or Knave† is a well-written story, with the action rather too crowded, and hardly concluding with the measure of poetical justice which best suits the British novel-reader. To the question implied by the title, 'Is the hero king or knave?' our answer would be, 'Neither the one or the other, but a tincture of both.' As in the case of all, or nearly all, there is a mixture of motives and influences. Godfrey Duncombe is weak, vain, and foolish, but he has a certain

* *Tatiana, or the Conspiracy*. By Prince Joseph Lubomirski. Translated from the French by Theodore E. Worledge. (Samuel Tinsley.)

† *King or Knave*? By the Author of 'Hilda and I' (Chapman & Hall.)

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased by 1.5 million (1990–1999) (Table 1).

There is a growing emphasis on the importance of the public sector in the UK, and the need to ensure that it is able to deliver the services that are required by the population. This has led to a number of initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector, including the introduction of performance targets and the restructuring of public services. The aim of this paper is to examine the impact of these initiatives on the public sector in the UK.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses the background to the public sector in the UK. Section 3 describes the initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector. Section 4 examines the impact of these initiatives on the public sector. Section 5 discusses the conclusions.

2. Background to the public sector in the UK

The public sector in the UK is made up of a number of different organizations, including the NHS, the local authorities, and the public corporations. The NHS is the largest public sector organization in the UK, and is responsible for providing health care to the population. The local authorities are responsible for providing a range of services, including housing, education, and social services. The public corporations are state-owned enterprises that provide a range of services, including electricity, gas, and water.

The public sector in the UK has a long history, and has played a major role in the development of the country. It has been responsible for providing a range of services that have improved the quality of life for the population. However, in recent years, the public sector has faced a number of challenges, including a decline in funding and a need to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

3. Initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector

There have been a number of initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector in the UK. These include the introduction of performance targets, the restructuring of public services, and the introduction of new technologies.

One of the most significant initiatives has been the introduction of performance targets. These targets are used to measure the performance of public sector organizations, and are used to identify areas for improvement. The targets are set by the government, and are used to monitor the progress of public sector organizations.

Another significant initiative has been the restructuring of public services. This has involved the merging of public sector organizations, and the introduction of new organizational structures. The aim of these initiatives is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

A third significant initiative has been the introduction of new technologies. This has involved the use of new technologies to improve the delivery of public services. For example, the use of new technologies has allowed public sector organizations to provide services more efficiently and effectively.

4. Impact of the initiatives on the public sector

The initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector have had a significant impact on the public sector in the UK. The introduction of performance targets has led to a number of improvements in the performance of public sector organizations. The restructuring of public services has led to a number of improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. The introduction of new technologies has led to a number of improvements in the delivery of public services.

5. Conclusions



A LANDSCAPE BY HOBBEEMA.

See THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.



generosity of character not unusual in such natures, and which goes some way towards redeeming them. There is the usual story of fashionable iniquities, which appear racy in the acting and the telling, but which are in effect trite and monotonous; racing, betting, card-playing, resulting generally in going to the bad and an early death. It is difficult to feel much sympathy with any of the characters except unbeatified Beatrice, who refuses a man she loves because she thinks he does not love her enough. Moreover the ethical interest is not wrought out sufficiently. In the case of a young fellow like Sir Godfrey, he either hardens into a knave, or develops if not exactly into a king, at least into something better than the former self. The story is fresh and brisk, sustains its interest, and at times shows some happiness of phrase and feeling.

We have left ourselves little space to speak of a work on Peru of remarkable fulness and value.* Mr. Squier was lately a Commissioner of the United States to Peru, and he spent nearly two years in thoroughly traversing the country. The work will be found extremely interesting, especially to Peruvian bondholders, who have an interest in the development of the resources of the country. There are resources, and they will probably be developed, but hardly in our time, or our children's children's time. Guano and gold have always gone together, but the gold has proved a source of great corruption to the nation. The new industry of nitrate of soda, of which the supply is boundless and the uses increasing, will prove hardly less valuable than guano. The cinchona or

bark-tree, growing on lofty mountain wildernesses, is perhaps the most precious of the productions of the country. Mr. Squier's own tastes have been mainly archaeological. He has worked diligently 'with compass, measuring-line, and photographic camera,' and the result is a remarkable wealth of illustration. But he has his stories of travelling adventures and sketches of scenery and social life. The book is thoroughly exhaustive of its subjects, and will require and will repay any careful study that may be given to it.

THE WAGNER FESTIVAL.

The visit of Herr Richard Wagner, after an interval of twenty-two years, has been indubitably the musical event of the month. The series of six concerts was planned to present the English public with some idea of the range of the composer's music, more especially to make them acquainted with his last great work, the *King of the Nibelungs*, which it is not likely can or will be ever given in its dramatic entirety in this country. There were also rumours that Herr Wagner desired to 'pick the plethoric pockets' of the English to cover deficits left by his Bayreuth Festival. Be that as it may, notwithstanding difficulties in the assemblage of a large orchestra at this season of the year, the concerts have taken place. As to their financial and musical success, the world is divided. The composer, however, met with a warm welcome on his first appearance, and the music of *Rienzi* and the *Tannhäuser* was listened to with pleasure. The same cannot be said of the *Rhinegold*, which the audience found decidedly tedious without its scenic accompaniments, a fact they evinced by leaving the Hall in large numbers. The same thing was repeated the next concert, when they

* *Peru: Incidents of Travel and Exploration in the Land of the Incas.* By E. George Squier, M.A., F.S.A. (Macmillan.)

left, in spite of the incomparable singing of Frau Materna in the *Walkure*, the real fact being that the *Flying Dutchman* had been sufficient for ordinary attention in one evening. The great mistake of the concerts has been their length. They have, however, gone on increasing in popularity, and royal patronage was not wanting at the third and fourth to set a good example in patience and appreciation. Mr. Hill and Frau Materna's splendid singing are matters not to be forgotten, though those who had the good fortune to hear the accomplished singer in Bayreuth last year, miss her splendid impersonation of Brunhilda. Hoarseness of various singers interfered with the execution of the fourth programme. The fifth concert also suffered severely from this, Messrs. Unger and Hill being quite *hors de combat*, and the programme thereby needing considerable alteration. But the audience was larger and more sympathetic. The funeral march from *Goetterdämmerung*, with its splendid orchestration and reminiscence motives of the entire *Ring*, told well, and was loudly encored. At the sixth concert the glorious 'March of the Master-Singers' brought the Wagner music home to a large and fashionable British audience.

THE PAINTER OF 'SMILING NATURE.'

The beautiful landscape after Meindert Hobbema, which we give this month, is a fine example, rendered with admirable effect on the wood, of a great master, whose present reputation is a curious instance of the tardy recognition of genius. Hobbema is supposed to have studied under Ruysdael, but, unlike his weird, dreamy, mysterious master, he dwelt on the serene and sunny aspects of Nature. For a long time Hobbema was eclipsed by the splendour of his master's fame, leading the dealers of those days to substitute the monogram or name of Ruysdael for that of the real painter. Now his works obtain prices higher than those of Ruysdael.

England is particularly rich in fine pictures by this landscape painter. Two superb views of a wooded country are at Grosvenor House, whilst our National Gallery has six pictures. Of these, two—a 'Water-Mill' 'of singular clearness,' and a 'Landscape' 'of the most luminous chiaroscuro'—were the gift of the late Mr. Wynn Ellis. They will well repay a careful study; they are pictures of commanding beauty by another true artist who was neglected in life, and who died in poverty.

MICHAEL STROGOFF, OR THE RUSSIAN COURIER.

BY JULES VERNE.

PART II.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NIGHT OF THE FIFTH OF
OCTOBER.

IVAN OGAREFF's plan had been contrived with the greatest care, and except for some unforeseen accident he believed that it must succeed. It was of importance that the Bolchaïa gate should be free when he gave it up. The attention of the besieged was therefore to be drawn to another part of the town. A diversion was agreed upon with the Emir.

This diversion was to be effected on the suburban side of Irkutsk, up and down the river, on its right bank. The attack on these two points was to be conducted in earnest, and at the same time a feigned attempt at crossing the Augara on the left bank was to be made. The Bolchaïa gate would be probably deserted, so much the more because on this side the Tartar outposts, having drawn back, would appear to have broken up.

It was the 5th of October. In four-and-twenty hours the capital of Eastern Siberia would be in the hands of the Emir, and the Grand Duke in the power of Ivan Ogareff.

During the day an unusual stir was going on in the Augara camp. From the windows of the palace and the houses on the right bank important preparations on the opposite shore could be distinctly seen. Numerous Tartar detachments were converging towards the camp, and from hour to hour reinforced the Emir's troops. These

movements, intended to deceive the besieged, were conducted in the most open manner possible before their eyes.

Ogareff had not concealed from the Grand Duke that an attack on this side was to be feared. He knew, he said, that an assault was to be made, both above and below the town, and he counselled the duke to reinforce the two more directly threatened points.

These preparations were carried out in order to support the advice given by Ogareff, which he was most urgent should be taken into consideration. Accordingly, after a council of war had been held in the palace, orders were given to concentrate the defence on the right bank of the Augara and at the two ends of the town, where the earthworks protected the river.

This was exactly what Ogareff wished. He did not expect that the Bolchaïa gate would be left entirely without defenders, but that there would only be a small number. Besides, Ogareff meant to give such importance to the diversion, that the Grand Duke would be obliged to oppose it with all his available forces.

In fact an occurrence of exceptional gravity, designed by Ogareff, was to afford its powerful aid to the accomplishment of his design. Even had Irkutsk not been attacked but on the distant point of the Bolchaïa gate and the right bank of the river, this occurrence would be sufficient to attract the whole mass of defenders exactly

to the spot to which Ogareff wished to draw them. His purpose was at the same time to produce so frightful a catastrophe that terror must inevitably overwhelm the hearts of the besieged.

There was every chance that the gate, left free at the time appointed, would be clear for the entrance of the thousands of Tartars now concealed under cover of the thick forest to the east.

All day the garrison and population of Irkutsk were on the alert. The measures to repel an attack on the points hitherto unassailed had been taken. The Grand Duke and General Voranzoff visited the posts, strengthened by their orders. Warsili Fedor's corps occupied the north of the town, but with orders to throw themselves where the danger was greatest. The right bank of the Augara had been protected with the few guns possessed by the defenders. With these measures, taken in time, thanks to the advice so opportunely given by Ivan Ogareff, there was good reason to hope that the expected attack would be repulsed. In that case the Tartars, momentarily discouraged, would no doubt not make another attempt against the town for several days. Now the troops expected by the Grand Duke might arrive at any hour. The safety or the loss of Irkutsk hung only by a thread.

On this day the sun, which had risen at twenty minutes to six, set at forty minutes past five, having traced its diurnal arc for eleven hours above the horizon. The twilight would struggle with the night for another two hours. Then it would be intensely dark, for the sky was cloudy, and there would be no moon.

This gloom would favour the plans of Ivan Ogareff.

For a few days already a sharp

frost had given warning of the approaching rigour of the Siberian winter, and this evening it was especially severe. The soldiers posted on the right bank of the Augara, obliged to conceal their position, had lighted no fires. They suffered cruelly from the low temperature. A few feet below them, the ice in large masses drifted down the current. All day these masses had been seen passing rapidly between the two banks.

This had been considered by the Grand Duke and his officers as a fortunate circumstance.

Should the channel of the Augara continue to be thus obstructed, the passage must be impracticable. The Tartars could use neither rafts nor boats. As to supposing that they could cross the river on the ice, that was not possible. The newly-frozen plain could not bear the weight of an assaulting column.

But this circumstance, as it appeared favourable to the defenders of Irkutsk, Ogareff might have regretted. He did not do so, however!

The traitor knew well that the Tartars would not try to pass the Augara, and that, on its side at least, their attempt was only a feint.

About ten in the evening, however, the state of the river sensibly improved, to the great surprise of the besieged, and still more to their disadvantage. The passage, till then impracticable, became all at once possible. The bed of the Augara was clear. The blocks of ice, which had for some days drifted past in large numbers, disappeared down the current, and five or six only now occupied the space between the banks. They no longer presented even the same structure as those formed under ordinary conditions and by the influence of a regular frost. They were simple pieces, torn off from

some ice-field, smooth, and not rising in rugged lumps.

The Russian officers reported this change in the state of the river to the Grand Duke. They suggested that this change was probably caused by the circumstance that, in some narrower part of the Augara, the blocks had accumulated so as to form a barrier.

We know that such was the case.

The passage of the Augara was thus open to the besiegers. There was greater reason than ever for the Russians to be on their guard.

Up to midnight nothing had occurred. On the eastern side, beyond the Bolchaïa gate, all was quiet. Not a glimmer was seen in the dense forest, which appeared confounded on the horizon with the masses of clouds hanging low down in the sky.

Lights flitting to and fro in the Augara camp showed that a considerable movement was taking place.

From a verst above and below the point where the scarp met the river's bank came a dull murmur, proving that the Tartars were on foot, expecting some signal.

An hour passed. Nothing new.

The bell of the Irkutsk cathedral was about to strike two o'clock in the morning, and not a movement amongst the besiegers had yet shown that they were about to commence the assault.

The Grand Duke and his officers began to suspect that they had been mistaken. Had it really been the Tartars' plan to surprise the town? The preceding nights had not been nearly so quiet. Musketry rattling from the outposts, shells whistling through the air; and this time, nothing.

The Grand Duke, General Voranzoff, and their aides-de-camp waited, ready to give their orders according to circumstances.

We have said that Ogareff occupied a room in the palace. It was a large chamber on the ground floor, its windows opening on a side terrace. By taking a few steps along this terrace a view of the river could be obtained.

Profound darkness reigned in the room. Ogareff stood by a window, awaiting the hour to act. The signal, of course, could come from him alone. This signal once given, when the greater part of the defenders of Irkutsk would be summoned to the points openly attacked, his plan was to leave the palace and hurry to the accomplishment of his work.

He now crouched in the shadow of the recess, like a wild beast ready to spring on its prey.

A few minutes before two o'clock, the Grand Duke desired that Michael Strogoff—which was the only name they could give to Ivan Ogareff—should be brought to him. An aide-de-camp came to the room, the door of which was closed. He called.

Ogareff, motionless near the window, and invisible in the shade, took good care not to answer.

The Grand Duke was therefore informed that the Czar's courier was not at that moment in the palace.

Two o'clock struck. Now was the time to cause the diversion agreed upon with the Tartars waiting for the assault.

Ivan Ogareff opened the window, and stationed himself at the north angle of the side terrace.

Below him flowed the waters of the Augara, roaring as they dashed round the broken piles. Ogareff took a match from his pocket, struck it, and lighted a small bunch of tow impregnated with priming-powder, which he threw into the river.

It was by the orders of Ivan

Ogareff that the torrents of mineral oil had been thrown on the surface of the Augara.

There are numerous naphtha springs below Irkutsk, on the right bank, between the suburb of Poshkavsk and the town. Ogareff had resolved to employ this terrible means to carry fire into Irkutsk. He therefore took possession of the immense reservoirs which contained the combustible liquid. It was only necessary to demolish a piece of wall in order to allow it to flow out in a vast stream.

This had been done that night, a few hours previously, and this was the reason that the raft which carried the true courier of the Czar, Nadia, and the fugitives floated on a current of mineral oil. Through the breaches in these reservoirs of enormous dimensions rushed the naphtha in torrents, and following the inclination of the ground, it spread over the surface of the river, where its density allowed it to float.

This was the way Ivan Ogareff carried on warfare. Allied with Tartars, he acted like a Tartar, and against his own countrymen.

The tow had been thrown on the waters of the Augara. In an instant, with electrical rapidity, as if the current had been of alcohol, the whole river was in a blaze above and below the town. Columns of blue flames ran between the two banks. Volumes of vapour curled up above. The few pieces of ice which still drifted were seized by the burning liquid and melted like wax on the top of a furnace, the evaporated water escaping to the air in shrill hisses.

At the same moment firing broke out on the north and south of the town. The enemy's batteries discharged their guns at random. Several thousand Tar-

tars rushed to the assault of the earthworks. The houses on the bank, built of wood, took fire in every direction. A bright light dissipated the darkness of the night.

'At last!' said Ivan Ogareff.

And he had good reason for congratulating himself. The diversion which he had planned was terrible. The defenders of Irkutsk found themselves between the attack of the Tartars and the fearful effects of fire. The bells rang, and all the able-bodied of the population ran, some towards the points attacked, and others towards the houses in the grasp of the flames, which it seemed too probable would ere long envelop the whole town.

The gate of Bolchaia was nearly free. Only a very small guard had been left there. And by the traitor's suggestion, and in order that the event might be explained apart from him and from political hate, this small guard had been chosen from the little band of exiles.

Ogareff reentered his room, now brilliantly lighted by the flames from the Augara; then he made ready to go out.

But scarcely had he opened the door when a woman rushed into the room, her clothes drenched, her hair in disorder.

'Sangarre!' exclaimed Ogareff, in the first moment of surprise, and not supposing that it could be any other woman than the gipsy.

It was not Sangarre; it was Nadia.

At the moment when, floating on the ice, the girl had uttered a cry on seeing the fire spreading along the current, Michael Strogoff had seized her in his arms, and plunged with her into the river itself to seek a refuge in its depths from the flames. The block

which bore them was then not more than thirty fathoms from the first quay below Irkutsk.

Swimming beneath the water, Michael managed to get a footing with Nadia on the quay.

Michael Strogoff had reached his journey's end! He was in Irkutsk!

'To the governor's palace!' said he to Nadia.

In less than ten minutes they arrived at the entrance to the palace. Long tongues of flame from the Augara licked its walls, but were powerless to set it on fire.

Beyond, the houses on the bank were in a blaze.

The palace being open to all, Michael and Nadia entered without difficulty. In the general confusion no one remarked them, although their garments were dripping.

A crowd of officers coming for orders, and of soldiers running to execute them, filled the great hall on the ground floor. There, in a sudden eddy of the confused multitude, Michael and the young girl were separated from each other.

Nadia ran distracted through the passages, calling her companion, and asking to be taken to the Grand Duke.

A door into a room flooded with light opened before her. She entered, and found herself suddenly face to face with the man whom she had met at Ichim, whom she had seen at Tomsk; face to face with the one whose villanous hand would an instant later betray the town.

'Ivan Ogareff!' she cried.

On hearing his name pronounced, the wretch started. His real name known, all his plans would be balked. There was but one thing to be done—to kill the person who had just uttered it.

Ogareff darted at Nadia; but

the girl, a knife in her hand, retreated against the wall, determined to defend herself.

'Ivan Ogareff!' again cried Nadia, knowing well that so detested a name would soon bring her help.

'Ah! Be silent!' hissed out the traitor between his clenched teeth.

'Ivan Ogareff!' exclaimed a third time the brave young girl, in a voice to which hate had added tenfold strength.

Mad with fury, Ogareff, drawing a dagger from his belt, again rushed at Nadia, and compelled her to retreat into a corner of the room.

Her last hope appeared gone, when the villain, suddenly lifted by an irresistible force, was dashed to the ground.

'Michael!' cried Nadia.

It was Michael Strogoff.

Michael had heard Nadia's call. Guided by her voice he had just in time reached Ivan Ogareff's room, and entered by the open door.

'Fear nothing, Nadia,' said he, placing himself between her and Ogareff.

'Ah!' cried the girl, 'take care, brother! The traitor is armed! He can see!'

Ogareff rose, and thinking he had an immeasurable advantage over the blind man, threw himself on him.

But with one hand the blind man grasped the arm of his enemy, seized his weapon, and hurled him again to the ground.

Pale with rage and shame, Ogareff remembered that he wore a sword. He drew it from its scabbard, and returned a second time to the charge.

Michael Strogoff also knew him.

A blind man! Ogareff had only to deal with a blind man! He was more than a match for him.

Nadia, terrified at the danger which threatened her companion in so unequal a struggle, ran to the door calling for help.

'Close the door, Nadia,' said Michael. 'Call no one, and leave me alone. The Czar's courier has nothing to fear to-day from this villain! Let him come on, if he dares! I am ready for him.'

In the mean time Ogareff, gathering himself together like a tiger about to spring, uttered not a word. The noise of his footsteps, his very breathing, he endeavoured to conceal from the ear of the blind man. His object was to strike before his opponent was aware of his approach, to strike him with a deadly blow. The traitor did not think of fighting, but assassinating the man whose name he had stolen.

Nadia, terrified and at the same time confident, watched this terrible scene with involuntary admiration. Michael's calm bearing seemed to have inspired her. Michael's sole weapon was his Siberian knife; he did not see his adversary armed with a sword, it is true. But Heaven's support seemed to be afforded him. How, without almost stirring, did he always face the point of the sword?

Ivan Ogareff watched his strange adversary with visible anxiety. His superhuman calm had an effect upon him. In vain, appealing to his reason, did he tell himself that in so unequal a combat all the advantages were on his side. The immobility of the blind man froze him. He had settled on the place where he would strike his victim—he had fixed upon it. What, then, hindered him from putting an end to his blind antagonist?

At last, with a spring he drove his sword full at Michael's breast.

An imperceptible movement

of the blind man's knife turned aside the blow. Michael had not been touched, and coolly he awaited a second attack.

Cold drops stood on Ogareff's brow. He drew back a step, then again leaped forward. But as the first, this second attempt failed. The knife had simply parried the blow from the traitor's useless sword.

Mad with rage and terror before this living statue, he gazed into the wide open eyes of the blind man. Those eyes, which seemed to pierce to the bottom of his soul, and yet which did not, could not see, exercised a sort of dreadful fascination over him.

All at once, Ogareff uttered a cry. A sudden light flashed across his brain.

'He sees!' he exclaimed, 'he sees!'

And like a wild beast trying to retreat into its den, step by step, terrified, he drew back to the end of the room.

Then the statue became animated, the blind man walked straight up to Ivan Ogareff, and placing himself right before him,

'Yes, I see!' said he. 'I see the mark of the knout which I gave you, traitor and coward! I see the place where I am about to strike you! Defend your life! It is a duel I deign to offer you! My knife against your sword!'

'He sees!' said Nadia. 'Gracious Heaven, is it possible!'

Ogareff felt that he was lost. But mustering all his courage, he sprang forward on his impassable adversary. The two blades crossed, but at a touch from Michael's knife, wielded in the hand of the Siberian hunter, the sword flew in splinters, and the wretch, stabbed to the heart, fell lifeless on the ground.

At the same moment the door was thrown open. The Grand

Duke, accompanied by some of his officers, appeared on the threshold.

The Grand Duke advanced. In the body lying on the ground he recognised the man whom he believed to be the Czar's courier.

Then in a threatening voice, 'Who killed that man?' he asked.

'I,' replied Michael.

One of the officers put a pistol to his temple, ready to fire.

'Your name?' asked the Grand Duke, before giving the order for his brains to be blown out.

'Your Highness,' answered Michael, 'ask me rather the name of the man who lies at your feet!'

'That man? I know him. He is a servant of my brother. He is the Czar's courier.'

'That man, your Highness, is not a courier of the Czar! He is Ivan Ogareff!'

'Ivan Ogareff!' exclaimed the Grand Duke.

'Yes; Ivan the traitor!'

'But who are you, then?'

'Michael Strogoff!'

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

MICHAEL STROGOFF was not, had never been blind. A purely human phenomenon, at the same time moral and physical, had neutralised the action of the incandescent blade which Feofar's executioner had passed before his eyes.

It may be remembered that, at the moment of the execution, Maria Strogoff was present, stretching out her hands towards her son. Michael gazed at her as a son would gaze at his mother when it is for the last time. The tears, which his pride in vain endeavoured to subdue, welling up from his heart, gathered under

his eyelids, and, volatilising on the cornea, had saved his sight. The vapour formed by his tears, interposing between the glowing sabre and his eyeballs, had been sufficient to annihilate the action of the heat. A similar effect is produced when a workman smelter, after dipping his hand in vapour, can with impunity hold it over a stream of melted iron.

Michael had immediately understood the danger in which he would be placed should he make known his secret to any one. He at once saw, on the other hand, that he might make use of his supposed blindness for the accomplishment of his designs. Because it was believed that he was blind, he would be allowed to go free. He must therefore be blind—blind to all, even to Nadia, blind everywhere—and not a gesture at any moment must let the truth be suspected. His resolution was taken. He must risk his life even to afford to all he might meet the proof of his want of sight. We know how perfectly he acted the part he had determined on.

His mother alone knew the truth, and he had whispered it to her in Tomsk itself, when bending over her in the dark he covered her with kisses.

When Ogareff had in his cruel irony held the imperial letter before the eyes which he believed were destroyed, Michael had been able to read, and had read the letter which disclosed the odious plans of the traitor. This was the reason of the wonderful resolution he exhibited during the second part of his journey. This was the reason of his unalterable longing to reach Irkutsk, so as to perform his mission by word of mouth. He knew that the town would be betrayed. He knew that the life of the Grand Duke was threatened.

The safety of the Czar's brother and of Siberia was in his hands.

This story was told in a few words to the Grand Duke, and Michael repeated also—and with what emotion!—the part Nadia had taken in these events.

'Who is this girl?' asked the Grand Duke.

'The daughter of the exile Warsili Fedor,' replied Michael.

'The daughter of Captain Fedor,' said the Grand Duke, 'has ceased to be the daughter of an exile. There are no longer exiles in Irkutsk.'

Nadia, less strong in joy than she had been in grief, fell on her knees before the Grand Duke, who raised her with one hand, while he extended the other to Michael.

An hour after Nadia was in her father's arms.

Michael Strogoff, Nadia, and Warsili Fedor were united. This was the height of happiness to them all.

The Tartars had been repulsed in their double attack on the town. Warsili Fedor, with his little band, had driven back the first assailants who presented themselves at the Bolchaïa gate, expecting to find it open for them, and which, by an instinctive feeling often arising from sound judgment, he had determined to remain at and defend.

At the same time as the Tartars were driven back the besieged had mastered the fire. The liquid naphtha having rapidly burnt to the surface of the water, the flames did not go beyond the houses on the shore, and left the other quarters of the town uninjured.

Before daybreak the troops of Feofar-Khan had retreated into their camp, leaving a large number of dead on and below the ramparts.

Among the dead was the gipsy

Sangarre, who had vainly endeavoured to join Ivan Ogareff.

For two days the besiegers attempted no fresh assault. They were discouraged by the death of Ogareff. This man was the main-spring of the invasion, and he alone, by his plots long since contrived, had had sufficient influence over the khans and their hordes to bring them to the conquest of Asiatic Russia.

However, the defenders of Irkutsk kept on their guard, and the investment still continued; but on the 7th of October, at day-break, cannon boomed out from the heights around Irkutsk.

It was the succouring army under the command of General Kisselef, and it was thus that he made known his welcome arrival to the Grand Duke.

The Tartars did not wait to be attacked. Not daring to run the risk of a battle under the walls of Irkutsk, they immediately broke up the Augara camp.

Irkutsk was at last relieved.

With the first Russian soldiers, two of Michael's friends entered the city. They were the inseparable Blount and Jolivet. On gaining the right bank of the Augara, by means of the icy barrier, they had escaped, as had the other fugitives, before the flames had reached their raft. This had been noted by Alcide Jolivet in his book in this way:

'Ran a narrow chance of being finished up like a lemon in a bowl of punch!'

Their joy was great on finding Nadia and Michael safe and sound, above all when they learnt that their brave companion was not blind. Harry Blount inscribed this observation:

'Red-hot iron is insufficient in some cases to destroy the sensibility of the optic nerve.'

Then the two correspondents,